

THE
SAINTS
DAILY
EXERCISE.

A TREATISE,
Unfolding the whole Dutie
of PRAYER.

Delivered in five SERMONS,
upon 1 THESS. 5. 17.

By the late faithfull and worthy Minister
of IESVS CHRIST,

JOHN PRESTON,

Dr. in Divinity, Chaplaine in ordinary to
his Maiesty, Master of Emmanuel Colledge in Cam-
bridge, and sometimes Preacher of Lincolnes Inne.

The Sixth EDITION, Corrected.

*The effectuall fervent prayer of a righteous
man availeth much, James 5. 16.*

*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will
not heare my Prayer, Psal. 66. 18.*

LONDON

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ANTHONY

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TO THE READER.

Courteous Reader,

TO discourse largely of the necessity and vse of this peece of spirituall armour, after so many learned and vsefull Treatises, vpon this subiect, may seeme superfluous, especially considering that there is much spoken to this purpose, for thy satisfaction, in the insuing Treatise; wherein, besides the unfolding of the nature of this dutie, (which is the Saints daily exercise) and strong inforcement to it, there is an endeavour to giue satisfaction in the most incident cases, want of clearing whereof is vsually an hindrance to the chearefull, and ready performance thereof. In all which, what hath beene done by this Reverend and worthy man, we had rather should appeare in the Treatise it selfe, to thy indifferent iudgement, then to bee much in setting downe our owne opinion. This we doubt not of, that, by reason of the spirituall, and convincing manner of handling this Argument, it will winne acceptance with many, especially considering, that it is of that nature, wherein, though much haue beene spoken, yet much more may be said with good relish to those that haue anie spirituall sense: for it is the most spirituall action, wherein wee haue nearer communion with God, than in anie other holie performance, and whereby it

A 2

pleaseth

To the Reader.

pleaseth God to conveigh all good to vs, to the performance whereof Christians finde most backwardnesse, and indisposednesse, and from thence most deiection of spirit; which also in these times, is most necessarie, wherein, unlesse we fetch helpe from heaven, this way, wee see the Church, and Cause of God like to be trampled vnder feete. Onelie remember, that we let these Sermons passe forth as they were delivered by himselfe, in publicke, without taking that libertie of adding or detracting, which, perhaps, some would haue thought meete: for wee thought it best that his owne meaning should be expressed in his owne words and manner, especially considering there is little which perhaps may seeme superfluous to some, but may, by Gods blessing, be vsefull to others. It would be a good prevention of many inconveniences, in this kinde, if able men would bee perswaded to publish their owne works in their life time, yet wee thinke it a good service to the Church, when that defect is supplied by giving some life to those things, which otherwise would haue died of themselves. The blessing of these labours of his we commend vnto God, & the benefit of them vnto thee, resting

Thine in our Lord Iesus Christ,

RICHARD SIBBS.

IOHN DAVENPORT.

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Year	Month	Day	Event	Year	Month	Day	Event
1789	Jan	1	First meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	1	First meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	2	Second meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	2	Second meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	3	Third meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	3	Third meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	4	Fourth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	4	Fourth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	5	Fifth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	5	Fifth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	6	Sixth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	6	Sixth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	7	Seventh meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	7	Seventh meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	8	Eighth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	8	Eighth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	9	Ninth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	9	Ninth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	10	Tenth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	10	Tenth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	11	Eleventh meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	11	Eleventh meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	12	Twelfth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	12	Twelfth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	13	Thirteenth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	13	Thirteenth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	14	Fourteenth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	14	Fourteenth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	15	Fifteenth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	15	Fifteenth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	16	Sixteenth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	16	Sixteenth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	17	Seventeenth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	17	Seventeenth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	18	Eighteenth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	18	Eighteenth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	19	Nineteenth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	19	Nineteenth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	20	Twentieth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	20	Twentieth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	21	Twenty-first meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	21	Twenty-first meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	22	Twenty-second meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	22	Twenty-second meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	23	Twenty-third meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	23	Twenty-third meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	24	Twenty-fourth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	24	Twenty-fourth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	25	Twenty-fifth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	25	Twenty-fifth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	26	Twenty-sixth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	26	Twenty-sixth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	27	Twenty-seventh meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	27	Twenty-seventh meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	28	Twenty-eighth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	28	Twenty-eighth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	29	Twenty-ninth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	29	Twenty-ninth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	30	Thirtieth meeting of the Society	1789	Jan	30	Thirtieth meeting of the Society
1789	Jan	31	First meeting of the Society in 1790	1789	Jan	31	First meeting of the Society in 1790

THE
SAINTS
DAILY
EXERCISE.

THE FIRST SERMON.

1 THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.



HE Apostle here, in the latter end of this Epistle, heapes up many precepts together, and therefore wee shall not neede to seeke out the dependance of these words from those that goe before, or those that follow after. *Rejoyce evermore, (saith hee,) Pray continually; In all things give thanks: for*

B

this

this is the will of God in Christ Iesus to you-wards.

We are now fallen upon this Text, where this dutie of prayer is commended to us, and it is a command from *God* himselfe delivered shortly, as lawes are wont to be, without any great premisses and reasons, and indeede, having therefore the more authority in it.

Pray continually.

3 Things considerable, for opening of the words.

IN the handling of which, wee will doe these three things:

First, we will shew you what *prayer* is.

Secondly, why the *Lord* requires this at our hands; for a man might object, the *Lord* knowes my wants well enough, he knowes my minde, and how I am affected? I, but yet the *Lord* will have us to *pray*, and to aske before he will bestow it upon us.

1 What prayer is.

2 In generall,

And lastly, what it is to *pray continually*.

For the first. if wee would define *prayer* in generall to you, I would give you no more but this description of it: *It is an expression of the minde to the Lord*: sometimes by words, sometimes without words, but yet there must be an expression, and some opening of the will to him. This is the generall.

3 In speciall,

But now to know what a right *prayer* is, what such a *prayer* is, as *God* accepts, you must have another definition which must have more ingredients into it, and so, *prayer* is, nothing else but an *expression or offering of those holy, and good dispositions*.

ons

sions to God, that arise from the Spirit, or the regenerate part, in the name of Iesus Christ. Where you are to observe this; That the prayers which wee make, are divided into one of these two sorts:

First some are such prayers as are the expressions of our owne spirits, the voyce of our owne spirits, and there is nothing but flesh in them; such prayers as any naturall man may make to the Lord: And these the Lord regards not, hee knowes not the meaning of them, that is, he doth not accept them.

Secondly, there are prayers that are the voyce of Gods owne Spirit, that is, such as arise from the regenerate part that is within us, which is quickened and enlarged to pray from the immediate helpe of the holy Ghost; these prayers are onely accepted, and of these it is said, *He knowes the meaning of the Spirit*: that is, hee so knowes it, and sees it, that also he accepts it. Therefore you shall see in *Hosea 7. 14.* when they prayed, and prayed earnestly, yea, they set a day apart for prayer, they called a solemne Assembly, and kept a fast, yet, saith the Lord plainly, *Ye did not call upon me when you howled upon your beds; for* (saith he) *you assembled your selves for corne, and for wine*, which any naturall man may doe: And therefore, (saith he) it is but an *howling*. It is the voyce of beasts to seeke for wine, and oyle, and corne, but he saith plainly, *You called not upon me*; when notwithstanding, they spent a whole day in prayer. But the meaning is, that the Lord regards this as no prayer at all.

Division of prayers into two sorts.

I

Such as come from our owne spirits.

Note.

2

Such as come from Gods Spirit.

Rom. 8. 27.

Hosea 7. 14.

Prayers of wicked men howlings.

B 2

And

The termes of
the description
opened.

Why bee u-
seth the word
(dispositions)
rather, than de-
sires.

When the de-
sires and dispo-
sitions of men
are good.

Quest.

Ans.

That temporall
things may be
desired in a
carnall man-
ner, and carnall
things in a spi-
rituall manner,
and how.

And therefore to open a little this description unto you; for it is one maine business that wee have to doe, in handling of this Text, to describe to you the meaning of this precept, What the nature of *Prayer* is, that you may know what kind of *Prayer* it is, that prevayles with God. I say, *It is an expresseion of holy and good dispositions*. I use that expresseion, rather of *dispositions* than *desires*, because there is some part of *prayer* that stands in thanksgiving, when you desire nothing at Gods hands, but give thanks for that you have received; marke, first, that they must be *holy and good*, the desires and dispositions must be good: for that is a rule, all the affections and desires are good, or evill, according as their objects are, those that are fixed upon good things, are good desires.

You will say then, what are the good things that make the desires and dispositions of the heart good?

They are temporall things, and spirituall both. A man may pray for temporall things in a spirituall manner, and the desire may be good; And againe, he may pray for spirituall things in a carnall manner, and the desire may be naught. Therefore that must be observed withall, that it is not simply the object, but there is a certaine manner of desiring too. For example, if a man pray for temporall things, for outward comforts, such things as belong to the present estate of his body here, If he pray for them with these conditions, that he may have that which is conveni-
ent

ent for him, he prayes for such a measure as *God* sees to be meet, as *Pro. 30. Feed me with convenient food for me*; this prayer is good. But (if any man will be rich, as *1 Tim. 6*) it is an inordinate desire, when men will have excesse of these outward things, and more than is fit for them. And again, if you desire that which is *convenient*, and spend it upon your lusts, if you desire health, and long life, that you may live more pleasantly, if you desire wealth, that you may live more deliciously, and not simply that which the creature may desire, and to the end that you may be the more inabled to serve the *Lord* in these things, your desire is not good. So I say, first it must be for that which is *convenient*, secondly, you must not spend it upon your lusts, but in *Gods* service.

And lastly, we must pray for them in a right method, *First the kingdome of God, and then other things*; that is, set a price on them, as you ought, not too high a price, but value them aright. We should so pray for outward things, as our prayers may be spirituall. On the other side, a man may pray for spirituall things in a carnall manner, as for temporall things in a spirituall manner. A naturall man may pray earnestly for faith, and for grace, and repentance, not out of any beaurie that hee sees in them, not out of any taste and relish that hee hath of them, but because hee thinkes them a bridge to leade him to Heaven, and that he cannot come thither without them: when he considers in his heart that he cannot be saved without these things, I say, then hee may

Prov. 30.8.

1 Tim. 6.9.

When the desire of outward things is good,

How a carnall man may pray for grace.

SPIRA, his
case,

These desires
must be offered
to God,

Arising from
the spirit, or regenerate part.

Expressions of
prayer in the
Scriptures.

1 Sam. i. 15.

desire them, and desire them earnestly. It was the case of *Francis Spira*, who tried so earnestly for grace, that he might have but a drop of it, because he could not be saved without it, he gives the reason himselfe; he said withall, he saw no excellencie in it, he desired it not for it selfe, and therefore he thought his prayers should not be heard. Thus you see that prayer is an *expression of holy and good desires*, and it is an *offering them up to the Lord*.

I will not stand upon that (you are well enough instructed in it) that whatsoever petition is made to the creature, it is not a prayer, it must onely be offered up to the Lord.

Then I adde, it is such as must *arise from the regenerate part*, that is, looke how much there is of the *regenerate part* in a prayer, looke how much the *holy Spirit* hath to doe in it, looke how much comes from that which is called the *inward man*, so farre it is sanctified, so farre that prayer is accepted, and no further. But, that we may open this a little more fully, we will shew you it by some other expressions of prayer, that we finde in the Scriptures.

It is called a *lifting up of the heart to God*, a *pouring forth of the soule to the Lord*, 1 Sam. i. 15. *A serving of him in spirit*, so Paul calleth it. Now we will open these phrases to you a little, you shall know more fully wherein the nature of right praying to God consists. That phrase the Apostle useth, *whom I serve in my spirit*, (it is the same word in the originall that is used for fasting and prayer.)

prayer.) Now what is that to pray to *God* in the Spirit? for we may say, a man cannot make a prayer, but there is an act of his minde goes to it, and every man what service soever he performs, his spirit must needs have a hand in it, so that it cannot be performed without the minde.

I take this to be the meaning of it: the Apostle his scope, is to distinguish the true and holy services of *God* from those that are but shadowes and counterfeits, that are but the body and car-casse of right service. Therefore, when he saith, *I serve the Lord in my spirit*, or, *I pray in the spirit*; the meaning is this, When the prayer of a man is not onely that which the understanding dictates to him, but when the whole soule, the will and affections goe together with his petition, and whatsoever the petition is, a mans heart is affected accordingly. As for example, If a man come to confesse his sinnes, and yet slight them inwardly in his heart; if a man pray for reconciliation with *God*, and yet have no longing and sighing in his heart after it; if hee earnestly aske grace, and the mortification of sinfull lust, when the heart doth not inwardly seeke it, now hee prayes not in the spirit. To pray in the spirit, is as that in *Ioh. 4. 24.* *He will be worshipped in spirit, and in truth.* The meaning is, so to pray, that the heart goe together with our petition; also, this is the meaning of that when a man powreth forth his soule before the *Lord*. So *Hannah* saith of her selfe, *I am a woman troubled, &c. and powre out my soule before the Lord.* That is, when a man delivers

To serve God
in the Spirit,
what,

Ioh. 4. 24.

To powre out
the soule to
God, what,

Austin.

Simile.

Note.

to *God* that which the understanding and minde hath devised, (for prayer is not worke of wit, or of memorie) but when a man powreth forth his whole soule (that is) his will and affections, when they goe together, when there is no reservation in his minde; but when all within him is opened and explicate, and exposed to the view of the *Lord*; not as *Austin* saith of himselfe, when he came to pray for the mortifying of his lusts, saith hee, *I had a secret inward desire that it should not be done.* Therefore when the soule is powred forth, the meaning is that all be opened to him, so that when a man will make an acceptable prayer, hee must make this accompt, he must then call in all his thoughts and affections, and recollect them together as the lines in the center, or as the Sunne beames in a burning glasse, and that makes prayer to be hot and fervent; whereas otherwise it is but a colde and dissipated thing, that hath no strength or efficacie in it.

Now withall, this you must know, that when we say the whole soule must goe together with the petition, the meaning is, that not onely the will and affections be employed, (for in a naturall man, in his desire of health, when he is sicke or wanteth assistance and guidance in difficult cases, not onely the understanding, but the will and affections are busie enough, it is likely) and therefore we adde this further, that that which is called the spirit, which is diffused in the whole soule, that it be set on worke in the performance of this holy duty to the *Lord*, whensoever wee seeke to him in prayer.

For

For this you know, that there are two things in a regenerate man; (for that you must take for granted by the way, that no naturall man is able to make a prayer acceptable to God, seeing there is no Spirit in him, but in the regenerate man) there is, I say, flesh and spirit; now when we come to powre forth our heart to the Lord, that which lyes uppermost, will be ready to be powred forth first; and that which is spirituall, it may be lyes in the bottome, and that is kept in; and so a man may make a carnall prayer, though he be a holy man; that is, when the flesh hath gotten the upper hand, as in some fits it may; when the mind is filled with worldly sorrow, and worldly rejoycing, and worldly desires, and these would be exprested to the Lord; It is a prayer that the Lord regards not, though the man be holy, from whence it comes: but right prayer is this; when the regenerate part is acted and stirred up, and the flesh that hinders, must be removed. For you know this, that wheresoever there is a regenerate part in any man, there is a great aptnesse in that to call upon God; and it cannot be disjoyned from it, but that is not alwayes in act.

As we see a fountaine, it hath alwayes an aptnes to powre forth water, it is ready to breake into a current, but if it be stopped with stones and mud, and other impediments, it cannot breake out: so he that is a regenerate man, that hath a holy part in him, there is an aptnesse to prayer. Which is that which our Saviour saith, *Mat. 26. 41. The spirit is willing*, that is, there is alwayes a willingnesse

Two things in a man regenerate. *Mat. 26. 41.*
No naturall man can make an acceptable prayer.

A holy man may make a carnall prayer.

Right prayer, what.

Simile.

An aptnesse in the regenerate part to prayer. *Mat. 26. 41.*

Now, the spirit
helpes our in-
firmities.

Rom. 8. 27.

Simile.

ness that followes the spirit, or the regenerate part in a holy man; but, saith he, *the flesh is backward*; that is, it stops this fountaine, and therefore *Rom. 8. 27. The spirit is said there to helpe our infirmities, and to make our requests for us*; that is, even as a man removes stones from a fountaine with his hands; and when he hath done that, it breakes out into a current, so the *holy Ghost* removes this flesh, that stops up this current, the spirit takes away those carnall impediments that are in use; and not onely so, but stirreth up the regenerate part; and when that is done, we are able to make a spiritual prayer unto God in Christ Iesus; So that is the thing that you are now to observe, that the Spirit must helpe our infirmities, when wee come to call upon God, and our prayers be so farre acceptable as they be the fruites of the regenerate part; now we want but one thing to adde in the definition.

Offered up in
the name of
Iesus Christ,

2 Chron. 26.

They are such prayers as are offered to God in the name of Iesus Christ.

This is a thing that you all know, that those prayers that are not offered up in Christ, are not acceptable, because the person is not regarded. It was the sinne of *Uzziah* in 2 Chron. 26. Hee would goe to the Temple himselfe being a King on the throne, and he would offer incense without a Priest. We doe the very selfe same thing, whensoever we go to offer up any prayer to God without Iesus Christ; In the olde law men might bring their sacrifices, but still the Priest must offer them; so must wee here, and the reason is given,

ven, *Revel. 8.* because the prayers that come from us, favour of the flesh, from which they come; and the *Angel of the Covenant mingles much incense with them*, and makes them sweet and acceptable to God, *with much incense*, that is, as the flesh is more, so there needes more incense, that they may be made acceptable to God the Father. So that wee have indeede a double intercessour, one is, *the Spirit that helps our infirmities*, that helps us to make our petitions, that quickens, and enlargeth our hearts to prayer. The other is the Intercessour to make them acceptable to God, that he may receive them, and not refuse and reject them. So much shall serue for the first thing, to shew you what the dutie is, what a right, true, and acceptable prayer is.

Now for the second, *why we must pray*, (for that objection a man may make) the Lord knowes my minde well enough, and what needes such an expression of it by prayer? The reasons briefly why the Lord will have us to pray, are taken;

Partly from himselfe.

And partly from us.

1. From himselfe, though he be willing to bestow mercies upon us, yet he will have us ask his leave before he doth it. As, you know, fathers do with their children, though they intend to bestow such things vpon them as are needfull, yet they will have their children to aske them; and as it is a common thing among men, though they be willing a man should passe thorow their ground yet they will have leave asked, because by that meanes

Revel. 8.
Why wee must
offer our pray-
ers in Christs
Name.

Intercessour
double.

2
Why the Lord
will have us to
pray, seeing he
knowes our
wants.

I
In respect of
himselfe.
Simile.

Simile.

To acknow-
ledge his prop-
erty in his
gifts.

meanes the property is acknowledged, other wise it would be taken as a common high way, so the *Lord* will have his servants come and aske, that they may acknowledge the property hee hath in those gifts hee bestowes upon them: Inde ede other wise wee would forget in what tenure wee hold these blessings we enjoy, and what service we owe to the *Lord*, as you know there is an homage due to the *Lord*, that the *Lord* might be acknowledged, so the *Lord* will have this dutie of prayer performed, that we may acknowledge him, that we hold all of him, and that we might remember the service that we ought to doe him, to rise and goe at his command, that is, to doe his service, which we would be ready to forget, if we were not accustomed to the duty of calling on him.

Simile.

3.
To honour
him.

Likewise he will have it done for his honours sake, he will have men call upon him, that they may learne to reverence him, and likewise that others might be stirred up to reverence him, and to honour him, and to feare him. The servants of a Prince doing honour and reverence to their *Lord*, they stirre up those that are lookers-on: And as the Schoolemen say of glory, Glory is properly this, not when a man hath an excellencie in him, (for that hee may have, and yet be without glory) but glory is an ostentation, a shewing out of that excellencie. It is the phrase that is used in the Sacrament, You shall celebrate the Sacrament, that you may shew forth the *Lords* death, so the *Lord* will have us come and call upon

Simile.

Glory what,

on his name to show forth the duty of prayer, and that we may show forth his glory. This is for the Lord himself.

Now for ourselves, we are to doe it, partly, that the graces of his spirit may be increased in us: for prayer exerciseth our graces, every grace is exercised in prayer, and they being exercised are increased. See an excellent place for this in Jude 20. *That you may edifie your selves in the holy faith, praying in the holy Ghost;* as if he should say; the way to edifie your selves, and build up your selves, is to pray in the holy Ghost; that is, spirituall prayer, made through the power, and assistance, and strength of the holy Ghost. Every such prayer builds us up, it increaseth every grace in us, faith, and repentance, and love, and obedience, and feare; all are increased by prayer.

Partly, because they are exercised and set on worke in prayer; for the very exercise increaseth them.

And partly also, because prayer brings us to Communion with God. Now, if good company increaseth grace, how much more will Communion with the Lord himselfe quicken and increase it?

Moreover, this dūtie is required, that we may be acquainted with God, for there is a strangeness betwene the Lord and us, when we do not call upon his name. It is the command which you shall finde in Iob. 22. *Acquaint thy selfe with the Lord, that thou mayest have peace with him, and thou shalt have prosperity.* Now, you know how ac-

quaintance

1 In respect of our selves,

I
That the graces in us may be increased.

Jude 20.

2
To exercise grace.

3
To bring us to communion with God.

4
To avoide strangeness with God.
Iob 22, 23.

Simile.

How acquaintance is gotten and lost.

quaintaince growes amongst men; it is by conversing together, by speaking one to another. On the other side, wee say, when that is broken off, when they salute not, when they speake not together, a strangeness growes, so it is in this: when we come to the Lord, and are frequent, and fervent in this duty of calling upon him, wee grow acquainted with him; and without it we grow strangers, and the Lord dwells as farre off, wee are not able to behold him, except wee be accustomed to it; and the more wee come into his presence, the more wee are acquainted with him. Therefore that is another reason why wee should use this, that wee may get acquaintance with the Lord.

5
To teach us thankfulness.

Likewise, that we may learne to be thankfull to him for those mercies we have received from him; for, if God should bestow mercies upon us unasked, we would forget them, his hand would not be acknowledged in them; and wee would not see his providence in disposing those blessings that we doe enjoy; but when we come to aske every thing before him, wee are then ready to see his hand more, and to prize it more, and we are disposed to more thankfulness. So that it is a sure rule commonly, What we winne with prayer, that wee weare with thankfulness, and that which wee get without prayer, wee spend, and use without any lifting up of the heart to God, in praising him, and acknowledging his hand in bestowing it upon us: so you see what this duty is. And,

Note.

What wee get without prayer, is spent unthankfully,

Secondly,

Secondly, why the Lord will have this dutie performed.

Now, thirdly, (in a word) what is it to pray continually? The word in the originall signifieth, such a performance of this dutie, that you doe not cease to doe it, at such times as God requires it at your hands. Compare this with that in the second Epistle to Timothy 1. 3: The Apostle saith there, that hee hath him in continuall remembrance; praying for him night and day, where the same word is used that is here. Now we cannot thinke that the Apostle had Timothy in continuall remembrance, that he was never out of his thought, but the meaning is, when hee did call upon God, from day to day, hee still remembred him. So that to pray continually, is to pray very much; to pray at those times when God requires us to pray. For it is the definition that Philosophers give of Idleness, a man is then said to be idle, when he doth not that which he ought, in the time when it is required of him. He is an idle man that workes not, when hee ought to worke; so hee is said not to pray continually, that prayes not when he ought to pray. So that I conceive this to be the meaning of the Apostle, Rejoyce evermore, (saith hee) but when hee comes to this exhortation of prayer, hee contents not himselfe to say, pray very often, but pray continually, as wee use to expresse our selves when wee would have a thing frequently done, wee say, see that you be alwayes doing of this. So the Apostles scope is to

What is it to pray continually.

Αδιαλείπτως.

1os.

2 Tim. 1. 3.

Idleness, what

Obs.

A constant course of prayer, at least twice a day is our duty.

Quest.

2 *Answ.*

The grounds of it.
1 From the text.

2 From examples.

Dan. 6. 3.

3 From reasons.

1 That God might be worshipped.

to shew that it should be exceeding often, and that it should be very much done. Hence wee gather this by the way, that wee are bound to keepe our constant course of calling upon God, at the least twice a day, whatsoever wee doe more.

But you will say, what ground have you for that, why doe you instance in that twice a day.

The ground of it is this, when the Apostle bids us *pray continually*, doe it exceeding much, doe it very often, the least wee can doe it is twice a day, we may doe it oftener, but that, I say, is the least. When we have such a command as this, when we have such a precept as this, *pray continually*, and this rule illustrated by such examples as we have in the Scripture, why is it recorded, if it be not true of every example in that kinde that is said of the generall example, *1 Cor. 10. They are written for our learning?* When it is said that *David* prayed oft, and *Daniel* expressly in *Dan. 6. 3. He prayed three times a day*, that was his constant course, I say, we may thinke we are bound to doe it at the least twice a day. Consider a little the reason of it, why we are bound to doe it, In the *Temple*, you know the *Lord* was worshipped twice a day, there was *the morning and the evening sacrifice*. What was the ground of that commandment? There was no reason of it, but that the *Lord* might be worshipped, and that was the time that he would have it done twice a day, morning and evening: but besides that, it was not onely that

that the *Lord* might be worshipped, (wherein we should follow that example of worshipping him morning and evening.) But likewise our occasions are such, that, that is the least we can doe, to call upon him constantly morning and evening: for there is no day but wee use many blessings, and wee take many of his creatures. Now we may not take any of them without his leave; so that thou art bound to aske for them before thou take them, and pray for a blessing upon them, or else thou hast no right to them, thou hast no lawfull use of them: that place is plaine, *1 Tim. 4: Every Creature of God is good, and ought not to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by prayer.* So that, if you take common blessings every day, and doe not seeke them at the *Lords* hands before you take them, they are not sanctified unto you, you have not a lawfull use of them, you have no right unto them.

Besides, my beloved, it is that which the *Lord* commands in every thing, *Make your requests knowne in every thing*, that is, whensoever you neede any thing, make your requests knowne; so in every thing give thanks. And therefore the least we can doe when we have received, and doe need so many mercies, is to give thanks, and to seeke to him so often, from day to day.

Moreover, do not our hearts need it, are they not readie to goe out of order, are they not readie to contract hardnesse, are they not readie to goe from the *Lord*, and to be hardened from *Gods* feare? Therefore this dutie is needfull, in that re-

C

gard,

That we may use blessings aright,

1 Tim 4.4.

3
From Gods command.

4
To keepe our hearts in order.

5.
To get forgive-
nesse of daily
sinnes.

Vse 1.
Shewing the
misery of wic-
ked men, in
that they can-
not pray.

Note.

gard, to compose them, and bring them backe a-
gaine in order.

Moreover, doe not the sinnes we commit dai-
ly, put a necessitie upon us of doing this, that they
may be forgiven, and done away, and that wee
may be reconciled to *God* againe: Therefore doe
not thinke that it is an arbitrary thing to call up-
on *God*, twice a day, because there is no particu-
lar expresse command; for if you consider these
places that I have named, and the reasons, wee
shall see there is a necessitie lies upon us to doe
it. So much shall serve for that, I come now to
make some use of this that hath bene delive-
red.

First, in that such prayers, as the *Lord* accepts,
are an expression of holy desires, such desires as
rise from the regenerate part of a man: Hence
then we see that all naturall men are in a misera-
ble condition, when times of extremitie come, &
when the day of death comes, when there is no
helpe in the world, but seeking to the *Lord*, when
all the creatures forsake them, and are not able
to helpe them, and there is no way to goe to the
Lord but by prayer; if prayer be an effect, and fruit
of the regenerate part of a man, a carnall man
is not able to helpe himselfe, he is in a miserable
condition. Therefore let men consider this that
put all off to times of extremity. Put the case,
thou hast warning enough, at such a time, put the
case thou hast the use of thy understanding, yet
thou art not able to doe any good without this:
for, if there be not grace in the heart, thou art
not

not able to make a spirituall prayer to the *Lord* that the *Lord* accepts. Therefore take heede of deserting and putting off, labour to be regenerate, to have your hearts renewed, while you have time, and if thou be not able to call upon *God* in the time of health, how wilt thou doe it when thy wits, and thy spirits are spent and lost, and in the times of sicknesse and extremitie? Therefore let that be considered, which we doe but touch by the way briefly.

Secondly, if the *Lord* command this, if it be the command of *God*, *Pray continually*: Then take heed of neglecting this dutie, rather be exhorted to be frequent, and serve in it, to continue therein, and watch thereto with all perseverance. It is a common fault amongst us, either we are ready to omit it, or come to it unwillingly, or else wee performe it in a carelesse and negligent manner, not considering, what a command lyeth upon the sons of men to performe it constantly, and conscionably. I beseech you consider this, that it is a priviledge purchased by the blood of *Iesus Christ*, *Christ* dyed for this end, it cost him the shedding of his blood, *That we through him, might have entrance to the throne of grace*: and will you let such a priviledge as this lye still? If you doe, so farre as is in you, you cause his blood to be shed in vaine: for if you neglect the priviledges gotten by that blood, so far you neglect the blood, that procured them; but to neglect this dutie, is to neglect that. Besides, if we aske you the reason, why you abstain from other sins, why

Vse 2.

Eph. 6.

Motives to prayer.

Christ dyed for this end.

2

It is Gods command.

C 2

you

you steale not, why you commit not adultery, and murther; The reason that you give, is, because the LORD hath commanded you. Hath not the LORD commanded you to pray constantly, at all times? If you make conscience of one commandement, why doe you not of another?

3
The example
of Saints,
Dan, 6. 10.

Consider *Daniell* in this case, in the 6. of *Daniel*, he would not omit a constant course of prayer, he did it three times a day, and that was his ordinary custome. If he would not omit it to spare his life, If he would not omit it in such a case of danger as that, why will you omit it for businesse, for a little advantage, for a little gaine, for a little wealth, or pelfe, or pompe, or pleasure, or whatsoever may draw you from that dutie?

4
The equitie of
it.

Doe but consider what an unreasonable, and what an unequal thing it is, that when the Lord gives us meate and drinke, and cloathes, from day to day, when he gives us sleepe everie night, when he provides for us such comforts, as wee have neede of, as there is not the least creature that doth us any service, but as farre as he sets it on worke to doe that service, for us to forget him, and not to give him thanks, and not to aske these things at his hands; not to seeke unto him, but to live as without *God in the world*, as we doe, when we neglect this duty: May, it is a profession of living without *God in the world*; wee are strangers to him, it is open rebellion against him. Therefore take heede of omitting it, take heede of neglecting it. Besides

Besides all this, wee should doe it for our owne sakes, if wee consider what use we have of this dutie for our selves. Is it not the key that openeth all *Gods* treasures? When heauen was shut vp, was not this the key that opened? When the wombes were shut up, was not this it that opened? You know, *Eliab prayed for rayne*, so wee may say for every other blessing. All *Gods* treasures are locked up, to those that doe not call upon his name, this opens the doore to them all, whatsoever they be that we have occasion to use, this is effectuell; it doth it better then any thing besides. If a man be sick, I will be bold to say it, a faithfull prayer is more able to heale his disease then the best medicine; *The prayer of faith shall heale the sick, Iam. 5.* You know the woman that had the bloody issue, when shee had spent all upon Physicians, and could doe no good, then she comes to Christ, and offered a faithfull prayer to him, that did it, when so many yeares physicke could not doe it. *Beloued*, if there be a Prince, or a great man, whose mind wee would have turned toward us, a faithfull prayer will doe it sooner than the best friends. So it was with *Nehemiah*, you know his request, that the *Lord* would *give him fauour in the sight of the man*; if we be in any strait, as it was in *Iosephs* case, if we have any difficult matter to bring to passe, this prayer and seeking to the *Lord*, will expedite, and set us at libertie sooner, it will finde a way to bring it about more than all the wits in the world; because it sets *God* on worke. You have no power to doe any thing.

3
The benefit of it.

Prayer the key to unlocke Gods treasures

James 5.

Nehem. 1. 11.

Prayer prevalent.

Certainely a praying Christian that is prevalent and potent with *God*, (that seekes to him) hee is able to doe more than all the witches in the world, they set the divell a worke, but prayer sets *God* a worke, it sets him a worke to doe us good and to heale us, and to deliver us out of extremities: and therefore, I say, for our owne sakes, even out of selfe-love, and for common comforts, you have neede to vse this. Certainly, if these things were beleived, (but you heare them, you give us the hearing for the time, but if they were beleaved,) many would be more frequent in this duty, they would not be so negligent in it, or come in so carelesse a manner to it.

6
It is the best way to fill the heart with joy.

Ioh. 16. 24.

Iames 5. 23.

Phil. 4. 6.

Besides this, I beseech you to consider this, every man desires joy and comfort, & commonly one thing that keepes us off from this duty, is sports and pleasures, one thing or other, that wee take delight in, which dampe and hinder us in these things, in spirituall performances: Prayer is the best way of all other to fill thy heart with joy, as wee see in *Iob. 16. 24.*: he saith there, *In my name ye have asked nothing hitherto, but now aske, that your joy may be full.* This is one motive that *Christ* useth to exhort us to be frequent in this duty, that our joy may be full: This I take to be the meaning of that of *Iames 5*: *If any man be sad, let him pray*, not onely because prayer is sutable to such a disposition, but likewise it will cheere him up, it is the way to get comfort; *If any be sad, let him pray.* So it is in *Phil. 4. 6.* *In all things make your requests knowne, and the peace of God shall keepe*

keeps you in the communion of Iesus Christ : That is it that brings peace, and quietnesse; and therefore there is much reason why we should be constant in this dutie, it is that which quickens us, it is that which fills us with joy, and comfort, and with peace, which is that every one desires.

Moreover, consider it is thy buckler, prayer is the helmet that keeps thee safe, when a man neglects it, when he ceaseth to goe to God by prayer, when he once shewes himselfe to be a stranger to the Lord by neglecting this dutie, then he is out of the pales of his protection, like the conies that goe out of their burrowes; for so is the Lord to those that pray, the Lord is a protection to those that call upon his name. The very calling upon his name, is a running under Gods wings, as it were, that is, a putting our selves under his shadow; but when thou neglectest that, thou wandrest abroad from him. Now doe we not neede protection from outward dangers, from day to day? doe we not need to be kept from the inward danger of sinne and temptation? Surely prayer is one part of the *spirituall Armour*, as we see Eph. 6. In the *complete Armor of God*, praier is reckoned up the last, as that which buckles up all the rest; saith the Apostle, *Continue in prayer, and watch to it with perseverance*. And you have the more reason to do it, because it is not only a part of this armour, but it enables you to use all the rest, to use the word, and to use faith, for prayer stirres them up all. What is it to have Armour, and not to have it ready? now praier makes it ready. Therefore you

7
Our safetie
consists in it.

Eph. 6.

Praier teach-
eth to use the
rest of the spi-
rituall armour.

Mat 26. 41.

Note.

Wee cannot
love Christ,
but wee must
call vpon him.

see *Christ* prescribes the same rule in *Mat. 26. 41*:
Pray that you enter not into temptation: as if that
 were the way to secure us, and to shelter, and
 to keepe us safe from falling into temptation. It
 is a thing I would advise you to, to pray, and to
 seeke to the *Lord* continually. Therefore, if wee
 should use onely this reason to you, to be con-
 stant in this duty, because it is for your safetie,
 it were sufficient. You know, when a man is *as a*
City whose walles are broken downe, when hee lies
 exposed to temptation, he is in a dangerous case.
 So I may use this *Dilemma* to you, if you have a
 disposition, if you thinke thus, I hope I am well
 enough, I hope my heart is in a temper good
 enough, I am not now exposed to any tempta-
 tion, I feare nothing, make this argument against
 thy selfe, Why doe I neglect so good a gale, if
 my heart be so well disposed to pray, why doe
 I then omit it? Againe, if there be any indispo-
 sition in me, why doe I hazard my selfe? what if
 Satan should set upon thee? what if the world
 should set upon thee? what if a sutable temptati-
 on agreeable to thy lusts be offered? art thou not
 in danger? and therefore a constant course should
 be kept in it, we should take heed of being negli-
 gent in it. And will a man now professe that hee
 hopes he is the servant of *God*, and in a good e-
 state, although he do not pray so much as others,
 (we speak not of frequency simply, but of such a
 performance as is required) I say, to professe that
 thou art a servant of *Christ*, and that thou lovest
 him, and that hee is thy husband, and that thou
 art

art his servant, and yet thou callest not upon him from day to day, this is an idle thing, it is impossible; if thou diddest love him, thou wouldest expresse thy selfe in calling upon his name. Shall a friend that is but an acquaintance to us, in whom wee delight, come to us, and wee are willing to spend many houres with him; and shall we professe our selves to be friends of *God*, and him to be a friend of us, and that we delight in him, and yet neglect this duty? This is a common thing amongst you, when you see a man that meditates all his matters himselfe, or if hee doe open his minde, and tell them to some bodie else, it must be such an one as professeth to be a friend to him; now if this friend should never heare from him, nor hee should never speake to him, or if hee doe, it is in such a negligent manner, as it may appeare, hee doth not trust him, hee doth not regard what he can doe for him, and he doth it so shortly, that he can scarcely tell what the businesse is; I say, in such a case, would you not reckon his profession of friendship to be an idle and empty profession? Now apply it to thy self, those that say they have communion with *God*, and they hope their estate is good enough, they stand in good tearmes with him, but yet, if they be in any necessity, for all the matters and occasions that fall out from day to day, either they thinke of them in themselves, or they are apt enough to declare them to man, or if they goe to *God*, they doe it negligently, they poast over the matter, so as they have

Simile.

If we be friends
of *God*, wee
must acquaint
him with our
state by prayer.

have scarce leisure to expresse themselves and their doings; doe you thinke hee will take such for friends? and doe you thinke, that this is a true, sound, and hearty profession? Therefore (to end this) I beseech you consider it, and take heede of being remisse, and negligent in it; you see it is a command from the LORD,
Pray continually.

And so much for this time.

F J N J S.



THE



THE SECOND SERMON.

I THES. 5. 17.

Pray continually.



Not to repeat what hath bin delivered, but to press this point on us a little further, & for, what is more necessary, than that wee should keepe a constant course in this duty, since the very life of Religion consists in it: I adde this to all I pressed in the morning, that if you doe neglect it, it exposeth you to great disadvantage, both for the outward man, and for the inward man; and there are but these two that you neede to care for.

For

3
The omission
of it doth dis-
advantage
men.

I
In the outward
man.

Simile.

For the outward man, it deprives you of the blessings : put the case, you have never so good successe in your enterprizes ; put the case you have outward comforts in abundance, yet still the blessing is wanting ; and not onely so, but it uncovers the rooffe, as it were, and the curse is rained downe upon your tables, upon your meat and drinke, upon all the endeavours, and all the enterprizes you take in hand. We consider not what we doe, when we neglect this dutie, what dangers we expose our selves unto from daie to daie ; for it is one thing o have outwards comforts, and another thing to have the blessing with them.

2
In the Inward
man.

Simile.

Iob 15.4.

Besides, consider what losse you suffer in the inward man, when ye neglect this duty at any time ; for that is readie to be distempered, and to goe out of order, it is readie to contract hardnesse, to contract soile ; spirituall grace is ready to decay. It falls out with mans heart, as it doth with a garden that is neglected ; it will quickly be overrunne with weedes, if you looke not diligently to it, and the way to looke to it, is constancie in this dutie. That is a notable place, *Iob 15.4*: when *Eliphaz* observed some distemper in *Iobs* affections (as he apprehended it) he tells him that the speech hee vsed was not comely, but vaine, and sinfull: and what then? *Surely Iob* (saith hee) *thou restrainest prayer from the Lord*: As if he should say, it is impossible, *Iob*, that thou shouldest fall into these distempers, if thou diddest keepe thy course constantly in this duty ; therefore

fore surely, saith he, thou restrainest prayer from the *Lord*; So it is with us, let us restrain prayer from *God*, and distempers will arise quickly in our spirits, worldly-mindednesse will be readie to grow upon us, we shall be apt to be carnall, we shall forget *God*, and forget our selves, and forget the good purposes, and desires wee had: and therefore that you may keepe your hearts in order, you must keepe a constant course in this dutie: for if you doe, (though your peace be interrupted, this will repaire it againe, it will make up the breaches againe, though there be some distempered affections, that grow upon us, yet prayer will compose all. As sleepe composeth drunkennesse, so prayer will compose the affections, a man may pray himselfe sober againe, nothing doth it sooner, nothing doth it more effectually; and this you shall finde, that as you, either omit it, or slight it over, so you shall finde a proportionable weakenesse growing upon the inward man, as the bodie feeles, when it neglecteth either sleepe, or dyet, or exercise: therefore to end this exhortation, let us be constant in it.

Onely remember this, (when wee exhort you thus to keepe a constant course, for which you heard so many reasons in the morning, I say, remember this caution) that if it be performed in a formall, or in a customary, and overly manner, you were as good to omit it altogether: for the *Lord* takes not our prayers by number, but by waight: when it is an outward picture, a dead

carcasse

Inward distempers arise, if prayer be neglected.

Simile.

Wee were as good not pray at all, as doe it in a formall or overly manner.

When prayer
is performed
aright.

Simile.

Simile.

Prayer in a cu-
stomary man-
ner, amends
not the heart.

carcasſe of prayer, when there is no life, no ſer-
vency in it, hee regards it not. Be not deceived
in this, it is a very uſuall deceit, it may bee a
mans conſcience would bee upon him, if hee
ſhould omit it altogether; and therefore when
he doth ſomething, his heart is ſatisfied, and
ſo hee growes worſe and worſe: therefore
conſider, that the very doing of the dutie, is
not that which the Lord heedes, but hee will
have it ſo performed, that the end may be ob-
tained, and that the thing may be effected, for
which you pray. If a man ſend his ſervant to goe
to ſuch a place, it is not his going to and fro that
he regards, but hee would have him to diſpatch
the buſineſſe; ſo in all other workes, he cares
not for the formality of performance, but
would have the thing ſo done, that it may bee
of uſe to him: If you ſet a ſervant to make a fire
for you, and he goe, and lay ſome greene wood
together, and perhaps put a few coales under,
this is not to make a fire for you, but hee muſt, ei-
ther get dry wood, or he muſt blow till it burne,
and be fit for uſe; ſo when your hearts are unfit,
when they are like greene wood, when you come
to warme them, and to quicken them by prayer
to God, it may be you poſt over this duty, and
leave your hearts as cold, and as diſtempered as
they were before. My Beloved, this is not to per-
forme this duty. This dutie is effectually per-
formed, when your hearts are wrought upon by it,
and when they are brought to a better tune, and
to a better temper than they were before. If you
finde

find sinfull lusts there, your businesse is to worke them out by prayer, to reason the matter, to expostulate the thing before the *Lord*, and not to give over, till you have set all the wheelles of your soule right, till you have made your hearts perfect with *God*; and if you finde your hearts too much cleaving to the world, you must weane them, and take them off; if you finde a deadnesse, and unaptnes, and indisposition in you, you must lift up your soules to the *Lord*, and not give over till you be quickened; and this is to performe the dutie in such a manner as the *Lord* accepts, otherwise it is an hypocriticall performance: for this is hypocrisie, when a man is not willing to let the dutie goe altogether, nor yet is willing to performe it fervently, and in a quicke and zealous manner: for he that omits it altogether is a profane person, and hee that performes it zealously, and to purpose, is an holy man; but an hypocrite goes betweene both, hee would doe something at it, but hee will not doe it thoroughly. And therefore, if thou finde that thou hast slubbred over this dutie from day to day, that thou performest it in a negligent manner, and perfunctorily, know that it is an hypocriticall performance, and therefore when we spend so much time in exhorting you to a constant course in this dutie, still remember, that you must performe it in such a manner, that it may have heat, and life in it, that it may be acceptable to *God*, and doe good to your owne hearts, to bring them to a more holy frame of grace,

What we must
doe in prayer.

Hypocrisie,
what.

Note.

grace, and to a better temper, than, it may bee, you found them in, when you went about the dutie.

Object. 1

This dutie requirerh much time.

Answ.

Threefould.

Answ. 1

The time spent in prayer hindreth not.

Mal. 3. 10.

Simile.

Answ. 2

It is greater than worldly businesse, and therefore should be preferred.

And if you object now, I, but it will cost us much time to doe this?

Indeed, one common cause, among all the rest, that keepes us off from the thorow performance of this dutie, is this, but (to speake to that in a word) remember this, that the time that is spent in calling upon God, hinders you not in your businesse, though it seeme to hinder you, and though it takes so much from the heape, yet indeede it increaseth the heape, as it is said of tithes and offering, *Bring them in*, and thinke not, that because you lessen the heape, that you are poorer men: no, saith the Lord, it will increase your store, *I will open the windowes of heaven*, and you shall have so much the more for it, so it is true in this case. In other things you see it well enough. You know, the baiting of the horse hinders not the journey, and the oyling of the wheele, and the whetting of the sithe, though there be a stop in the worke for a time, yet, as our common saying is, a whet is no let, and the doing of this is no impediment.

Secondly, put the case it were, yet is it not the greater businesse? what is it that you get by all your labours, and trauailes? if it be riches, it comes not into any comparison with grace, and holinesse, with that riches wherewith prayer makes you rich. But, say it be somewhat more noble than that, as learning, or knowledge, yet what

what is that to the renewing of Gods image in us? were it not better, to spend time to get grace to make vs *rich to God*; to make vs to get strength in the inward man, to passe through all varieties of afflictions, in getting that which is the chiefest excellencie of all others? for is not that the best excellencie? When *Adam* was in *paradise*, the haveing of *Gods Image*, you know, it excelled all other excellencies in the world, and so it doth still, and the more you pray, the more you get of this *Image*: for a man of much prayer is alwaies a man of much grace, it much increaseth those spirituall gifts, which are better than all the outward things you can get by your employment and diligence in them: therefore, I say, though it doe spend you much time, yet know (as *Christ* said to *Mary*) he that prayes much, though he bee a great loser in other things, yet he *chooseth the better part*.

What is mans best excellency.

Prayer increaseth Gods Image.

Last of all, consider this, when thou comest to offer sacrifice to *God*, wouldest thou offer that which cost thee nothing? If thy continuing in prayer, and spending much time in it should cost thee some disadvantage in thy affaires, and should lose thee that which another gaines, that thou gettest not so much knowledge, as another man doth, thou doest not so much in thy trade, in thy businesse, thou doest not set things in order, as thou mightest have done; yet know this, that it is great wisdome to make our service to *God* costly to us; you know *Dauids* choise: *Shall I offer to the Lord that which cost me nothing?* and therefore

Ans. 3

We must perform it, though with disadvantage, that our sacrifice may cost somewhat.

D

he

he would needs give the worth to *Arannah* the *Iebusite* for that which he bought; and therefore, since it is to a good master, that sees what you doe, that knowes what is costeth, and what losse you are at, and withall, that is willing and able to recompence it, why should you shorten this businesse, and putt it over, because of other occasions, and other businesse that you have to doe?

Object. 2.
In respect of
unfitnessse.

Ans. 1.
God accepts
the will for the
deed, when.

Oh, but a man will say further, I am willing to doe it, but I am unfit for it, and it may be the longer I strive, the more unfit I grow.

To this I answer, first, in generall, if thou doe it as well as thou canst, though thou doe it not so well as thou wouldest, in this case, *God accepts the will for the deed*, when a man puts his strength to it, when there is no indiligence in him, when there is no lazinesse, (for in that case he will not accept the will for the deed, but) when a man doth his utmost, as those that would have given more, and could not, their will was accepted for the deed, in *2 Cor. 8. 12.* I say, when thou doest what thou canst, when thou sparest no labour to get thy heart upon the wing, to raise and quicken it, and to enlarge it to this duty: there *God accepts it*.

2 Cor. 8. 12, 13.

Ans. 2.
The best fit-
ting to it, is to
fall upon per-
formance.

But againe, I adde further, there is an unskillfullnesse in going about this duty: many times when we are not fit, we thinke to make our selves fitter, by spending time in thoughts, and meditations before, which I denie not but they may be profitall: but yet this I will propound to you, that

that the best way to fit our selves to this dutie, when we finde an indisposition unto it, is, not to stay till we have prepared our selves by meditation, but to fall presently upon the duty, (I will give you the reason of it) because though a preparation is required for the performance of every spirituall dutie, yet, the remote preparation is that which is intended, and meant, when we say we must prepare: for, if we speake of that which is immediate, the very doing of the dutie is the best preparation to it. For example, if a man were to runne a race, if he were to do any bodily exercise, there must be strength of bodie, he must be fed well, that he may have abilitie; but the use of the very exercise it selfe, the very particular act, that is of the same kind with the exercise, is the best to fit him for it: so in this dutie of prayer, it is true, to be strong in the *inward man*, to have much knowledge, to have much grace, makes a man able and fit for the dutie; but if you speake of the immediate preparation for it, I say, the best way to prepare us is the very dutie it selfe; as all actions, of the same kinde, increase the habits, so prayer makes us fit for prayer; and that is a rule, *The way to Godlinesse is in the compassse of Godlinesse it selfe*; that is, the way to grow in any grace is the exercise of that grace.

It is a point that *Luther* pressed, and he pressed it out of his owne experience, and this reason he useth; In this case, saith he, when a man goes about to fit himselfe, by working on his owne thoughts, now he goes about to overcome

D 2

his

Simile.

Exercise of
grace increa-
seth it.

Note.

Note this ex-
pression of
LUTHER.

By labouring
against indis-
position by
our owne
strength, we
are more in-
tangled.

Object.

Ans.

7 Impediments
in prayer, that
makes it diffi-
cult.

his unfitness by his owne strength, and to contend with Satan alone; but when a man feeleth an indisposition, and goes to *God* by praier, and rests on *God* to fit him, he takes *God*'s strength to oppose the indisposition, and deadnesse of his flesh, and the temptations of Satan, that hinder him, and resist him. Therefore you shall find this to be the best way to fit your selves for prayer, namely to performe the dutie. If you seeke to expedite, and devolve your selves out of your unfitness, by the working of your owne thoughts, commonly, you involve your selves farther into those labyrinths, and are caught more and more. But this I speake by the way concerning matter of unfitness. The maine answer to this objection, is that which I gave you before, that if a man doe what he can and doe it faithfully, and in sincerity, that indisposition shall not hinder him; but still remember it must be done, it is not an excuse to us, at any time, nor ought to be, that we should omit the duty wholly, under pretence of an unfitness.

Thirdly, a man is ready to say again, But I find many difficulties, how shal I do to remove them?

The best way hereunto, is the very naming of the difficulties to you, that you may know them, and make account of them; therefore you must consider this in generall, that, indeed, it is not an easie thing to call upon *God* constantly: our misprision of the dutie, our reckoning of it, that it is a more facile, and easie thing, than it is, makes us more to slight it, and causeth us

us

us not to goe about it with that intention, which otherwise we would, but consider a little what it is. The duty is very spirituall, and our hearts are carnall, and it is no easie thing to bring spirituall duties, and carnall hearts together.

1
Impediment.
Our hearts are carnall.
Note.

Besides, our natures are very backward to come into the *Lords* presence, partly by reason of his great glory, by reason of his Majesty, who dwells in light unaccessible, and our weake eyes are apt to be dazeled with it, and partly out of an accustomednes, we are not used to it, and therefore we are ready to fly from him, as beasts that are wilde, and are not tamed to our hands, are ready to fly from us, so backward is our nature to come into his presence.

2
We are loth to come into Gods presence, and why.

Simile.

Againe, the variety of occasions hinders us, every thing keepes us backe; if a mans heart be cheerefull, it is apt to delight in other things; if a mans heart be sad, on the other side, if it be a slight sadnesse, men are ready to drive it away with company, and with sports, and with doing other things; and if the sadnesse be great, we are swallowed up with anguish of spirit, and then any thing is easier than to pray, as you may see by *Judas*, it was easier for him to dispatch himselfe, than to goe and call upon *God*, so it is with men, when they have excessive griefe, when their anguish of heart is exceeding great: so that, whether a man hath a cheerefull disposition, or a sad, whether the sadnesse be great or small, still you shall finde a difficulty. If we be idle, and have

3.
Variety of occasions hinder us.

Note.

D 3

nothing

nothing to doe, our hearts will be posselt with vaine thoughts; and, if we be full of businesse, that distracts us also; and indisposeth us on the other side: so still there are impediments.

4. But there is one great impediment; among the rest, and most common, which is worldly cares, and worldly-mindednesse; worldly cares hinder spirituall prayer, and spirituall conference, and the holy performance, almost, of every duty; and therefore if you finde a difficulty in it, looke narrowly, if that be not the cause.

5. Againt, another great cause of this difficulty in prayer, of such backwardnesse to it, of such indisposition to it, is, because we doe not well consider the nature of God; we want faith in his power, and in his providence, we doe not consider, that he hath that disposing hand, which he hath in every thing that belongs to us; in health, in sicknesse, in poverty, in riches, in good successe, and ill successe: for, if we did see the providence of God, and acknowledge it more, wee should be ready to call upon him, but this want of faith in his providence, that the Lord is not seene in his greatnesse, and in his mighty power, this causeth men to bee backward to seeke to him, but very forward to seeke to the creatures. When we have any thing to doe, of any consequence, wee are ready to post from this man to that man, and from this meanes to that meanes, but very backward and negligent to goe to God in prayer, to have the thing brought to passe that wee desire, and this ariseth from want of faith,

and

Want of faith
in Gods power
and provi-
dence.

When we are
so backward to
pray to God.

and from ignorance of God, and our not consideration of him.

Besides, Satan hinders us exceedingly in this dutie; for he knowes of what moment it is, and of what consequence, and therefore he doth as the *Aramites* did, he fights not against small nor great, but against the King, he knowes it is this duty which quickens every grace, it is the greatest enemy which he hath, and if he can keepe us from prayer, hee hath the upper hand of us, hee hath wrested the weapon out of our hands, hee hath disarmed us, as it were, and then he may doe what he will with us.

Likewise the sins we commit, especially grosse finnes, they are a great hindrance to this dutie, and keepe from the spirituall, and cheerefull performance of it: for sinne wounds the conscience, it disjoyneth and dismembers the soule, and a disjoynted member, you know, is unfit to doe any businesse; yea, when the sinne is healed and forgiven, yet there is a sorenesse left in the heart, though some assurance of pardon should follow upon the commission of a great sinne, so that this is another impediment. I must not stand to reckon up many, we shall finde enough by continuall experience.

Onely this use we must make of it, that, if the impediments be so many, and the difficulties that keepe us from a constant course in prayer, and from the performance of it to purpose, so great, then we must put on a resolution to breake through all, and lay it as an inviolable law upon

D 4

our

6

Satan hindreth

1 Kings 22.31

What was A
first motion
which our good
angel made

7

The commission of great finnes.

Simile.

Use 1.

What course is to be taken against these impediments.

A new indisposition will be on us daily to prayer.

Note this well.

Removing the objections that are against prayer, doth strengthen us to the duty.

our selves, that we will not alter. Let us thinke with our selves that the thing is difficult, and will cost all the care, and all the intention that may be; yea, when thou hast overcome the difficulties at one time, it may be, the next day, thou shalt meete with new conflicts, new distempers, new affections, new strength of lusts, and a new indisposition of minde will be on thee, and therefore he that will be constant in this dutie, must put on a strong resolution; as it was the saying of a holy man, one of the holiest men that these latter times had, that he never went to pray to God, but he found so many impediments, that except he bound himselfe by an unalterable resolution, that he resolved not to breake upon any occasion, he could never have kept a constant course in it, or, if he had, he should never have kept himselfe from a formall, customary performance of it. But I will adde no more, to presse this upon you, there hath beene enough said, I beseech you consider it.

Now that which I promised in the morning to doe, which is, that which doth exceedingly strengthen us to the performance of this duty of calling upon God, of *praying continually*, (which wee are here commanded to doe) is to remove certaine objections, which are in the mindes of men, that secretly weaken the estimation of this truth, and insensibly takes us off, when wee marke them not: for, Beloved, when wee are so negligent in it, surely there is something that is the cause of it, and if wee could finde the cause,

cause, and remove it, we could not spend an houre better.

The objections, that are commonly in the hearts of men, are many, I will name to you but these foure briefly:

First, a man is ready to say, what need I spend so much time, and be so large in the expression of my wants to God, when hee knowes them? I cannot make them better knowne to him, hee knowes them well enough already, and therefore what needeth it?

To this I answer (in a word, because it is an objection that hath not much weight in it) that it is true, the Lord knowes thy wants, but withall, hee will have thee to know them, because otherwise thou wilt not seeke to him, thou wilt not set a price upon the things that he bestowes on thee, thou wilt not be thankfull to him, when he hath granted them, and therefore you shall finde our Saviour Christ useth this very argument, as a meanes to quicken us to prayer, saying, *Your heavenly Father knowes what you have need of;* what then? Shall we not therefore pray? Yes, saith hee, therefore pray ye the more earnestly, and the more importunately to him: for since he knowes your wants, hee will be more ready to heare your requests.

I, but it will be said againe, that he doth not on-ly know them, but he also meanes, and purposeth to bestow them: for he hath made a promise to us, and his promise is firme and sure, and God is just, and must keepe his promise, and when he hath

4 Objections
against prayer.

Object. 1

Ans.
Why God will
have us to pray
though hee
know our
wants.

Mat. 6.

Object. 2.

hath fully purposed it, what needes so much praying to bring it to passe?

Ans. 1.
Though God purpose to give blessing, it is upon condition that wee pray.

1 Kings 18.
41, 42.

How bold was
that of old time
2 Sam. 7. 31
2 Sam. 7. 38
Dan 9. 17

Ans. 1. I answer, the promises of God are to be understood, with this secret connexion annexed, I will doe such and such a thing for you, if you pray, though it be not expressed: and therefore we see when God promised things in particular, yet still they prayed, and prayed earnestly. When hee promised *Elisha* that it should raine, yet, wee see, he prayed, and contended much in his prayer; when he made a promise to *David*, that he would make him an house, yet, you know, *David* went to the house of the Lord, and sate before him, and made earnest prayer, as is recorded in the 2. of *Sam.* So *Daniel* had a particular promise, and yet he prayed, and prayed long. The example of our Saviour *Christ* is without exception, who had all the promises sure to him, yet, you see, he prayed, yea, he spent whole nights in prayer, and therefore you must understand it, that though you have a promise made, though the thing be never so sure to you, yet it is to be understood with that, if you call upon God.

Ans. 2.
He will have us doe it to worship him.

To worship
God, what.

And why the Lord will have you doe it, I shewed you many reasons in the morning, wee will adde this to it: What if the Lord will have thee call upon him, though he purpose to doe the thing, even for this end, that thou maist worship him? For, what is it to worship the Lord? you shall finde this usuall in the olde Testament, The people bowed themselves and worshipped, or they fell upon their faces and worshipped. The meaning

is

is this, to worship God is nothing else, but to acknowledge the worth that he that is in him. As when you doe worship to a man, you doe use so much outward demeanour and observance to him, as may acknowledge a worth in him above another man. outward gesture, that is, the outward worshipping of God, the inward worship is inwardly to acknowledge his attributes. Now you shall see, prayer gives an acknowledgement of his attributes most of any thing; for hee that prayes to God, he doth, in so doing, acknowledge his omnipresence, and his omniscience; that he heares that which the Idols of the Gentiles could not doe; that hee knowes the secrets of mens hearts, that neither men nor Angels can doe.

Againe, it acknowledgeth his Almighty power, that hee is able to doe any thing; for that is presupposed, when we come and seeke to him.

Againe, it acknowledgeth his mercy and his goodnesse; that he is not onely able, but exceeding willing to helpe.

Againe, it acknowledgeth his truth, that as he hath promised, so, I make account he will performe it, when I go and seeke to him; in a word, all the attributes of God are acknowledged in prayer. Therefore, therein you worship him in a speciall manner, when you goe and seeke to him, and pray to him; in so doing you acknowledge him, yea, you acknowledge him to be a Lord and a father, as when we see a childe runne to a man, and aske him blessing, when we see him aske him food,

Prayer acknowledgeth all Gods Attributes.

Omniscience.

Power.

Mercie.

Truth.

Simile.

toode, and rayment, wee say, surely such a man is his Father; so this very praying to God, is a worshipping of him, because it acknowledgeth his Attributes, and his relation to us, and ours to him.

Object. 3.

But againe, thirdly, it will be objected, I but, alas, what can the endeavours or the prayers of a weake man doe? can they change the purpose of Almighty God, if he doe not intend to doe this thing for mee, shall I hope to alter him?

Ans.
God is not
changed by
our prayers,
but our selves.
Simile.

For answer to this, I say this, in brieft, that when you doe call upon God, hee is not changed by your prayers, but the change is wrought in you, as wee have said to you heretofore, when a Physician is sought unto by his patient, the patient desires him earnestly to give him such a cordiall, and such restorative Physicke, that is pleasing to him; the Physitian denies him long, yet in the end, he yeelds unto it. VVhy? not because there is any change in the Physitian, but because there is a change in the patient, he is now fitted for this, before he was not: so then the Physitian yeelds now, whereas before he refused, and yet the change is in the patient, and not in the Physitian: and therefore, beloved, when you goe about to strive with God in prayer, when you contend, and wrestle with him, (for so we ought to doe) when you use many reasons to perswade him, you alter not him, but your selves: for those arguments that you use, are not so much to perswade him to helpe you,

you, as to perswade your hearts to more faith, to more love, to more obedience, to more humilitie and thankfulness; and that indeede is the reason, why prayer prevailes with *God*, not that the very sending up is that, that prevailes with him, but because a faithfull, and a spirituall prayer puts the heart in a better disposition; so that a man is now made ready to receive a blessing at *Gods* hands, that before hee was not: So that, when you thinke you draw *God* to you, with your arguments, in truth, you draw your selves neerer to him; as when a man in a ship pluckes a rock, it seemeth as if hee plucked the rock neerer to the shippe, when as the shippe is plucked neerer to the rock: so, I say, wee draw our selves neerer to the *Lord*, and when wee draw neerer to the *Lord*, in praier, and there is a spirituall disposition wrought in our hearts, by the exercise of this dutie, then indeede the *Lord* drawes neere to us, to send vs helpe, and to grant our requests, that wee put vp to him; and therefore, that you should marke by the way, that any prayer, as it hath a higher pitch of holinesse in affection, and as it hath stronger arguments in it, so it is a better prayer, not because this prayer shall prevaile with *God* more, or, that the excellencie of this prayer should move him, but because this pitch of holy affection, and strength of argument workes upon your hearts: for the strength of arguments moves your understanding, and the holinesse of affection puts your will in a frame

Arguments in prayer are not to perswade God but our selves.

Simile.

What prayers are the best.

frame, and so disposeth your hearts, and fits you, as the patient, we spake of before, is fitted, when the Physitian is willing to give the thing hee desired.

Object. 4.
Twofold.

I

But the last objection, which indeed is more than all the rest, is this;

A man is ready to say, we see there are many men that doe not call upon *God*, and yet enjoy many mercies: it may be, a man can say with himselfe, when he did not use to pray, he had health, and sleepe, and protection.

2

Againe, on the other side, he hath prayed for such and such things, and yet they have not been granted. So this objection hath two parts, that a man hath obtained blessings, without prayer, and againe he hath prayed, and yet hee hath not obtained the blessings hee sought for, at the *Lords* hands.

Ans.

For answer to the first, that men doe obtaine many blessings that doe not pray, (as how many young men are there, and old men too, that have health, and wealth, and peace, and liberty, and abundance of all things, and yet eyther they seeke not to *God*, or if they doe, yet not in a holy and spirituall manner) and therefore this objection had need to be answered; and therefore I answer briefly:

I

Answer to the
first part of the
objection.

Ans. I

First, though they have these blessings, yet they have them uncertainly, they have no promise of them, they cannot build upon them; whereas they are sure mercies to the righteous man, he can build upon these blessings: for hee hath

hath a father to goe to, whose love he knowes, and hee hath sure promises to build on, the other, though hee hath them, yet hee is in a slippery place, when he enjoyes them; it is an accidentall thing, he hath them from the hand of an enemy, and he knowes not how long he shall enjoy them.

But I answer againe, (which is the chiefe answer to this objection) that there is a great deale of difference betweene having blessings through the providence of God, and between having them from the mercy of God, and by vertue of his promise, and out of his love to us in *Christ Iesus*. A naturall man may have many blessings of God, (so God said that he made *Ieroboam* a King, he gave him a Kingdome; and many such passages we shall finde, when men come unjustly to them, as he did to the Kingdome, yet God saith, he did it, that is, it was by his providence) and yet hee hath them not in mercy: for if thou hast these blessings, health and sleepe, and successe in thy enterprises, from day to day, and yet thy heart tells thee within, that thou hast not sought them at the *Lords* hands, as thou oughtest, I say to such a man, (and marke it) it were better for him that he should want them: for certainly, when hee hath them, in this manner, he hath them without a blessing; yea, he hath them with a curse, and so had better to be without them; as it had bin better for *Ahab* to have beene without his vineyard, and as it had beene better for *Gehazi*, to have gone without his reward, that hee had of *Na-*

man

Men that have blessings without prayer, have them uncertainly.

Ans^w. 2.
Difference betweene having of blessings through the providence of God, and from the love of God.

To have outward things without prayer we were better want them,

man the *Assyrian*, (for you know he had the leprosie with it :) it had beene better for the children of *Israel* to have gone without their quailles; for you know the curse that followed, death went along with them; so when a man shall have peace and prosperity, and abundance of all things without seeking them at the *Lords* hands, from day to day, I say, hee had better to have wanted them; for there goes death together with them. It is said plainly, that *ease slayeth the foolish*, (that is to say) this very prosperity, this thriving, (notwithstanding a neglecting of prayer, and of holy duties) I say, it carries death along with it, as the obtaining of the Vineyard, brought death to *Achab*, the getting of the Kingdom was the destruction of *Ieroboam*, and therefore men have little cause to comfort themselves with this, that they injoy many blessings, and never pray for them.

Ans. 3
Many things
bestowed on
wicked men
for the Churches good

Isay. 45. 4.

But, to answer this poynt more fully, I say, many blessings are bestowed upon men, not for their owne sakes, but for the Churches sake. A man may have strength of body, he may have great gifts of mind, he may have great successe in using those gifts, he may bring great enterprizes to passe, so that you may truly say, the hand of *God* is with him; all this may be done, not for his sake, but for the sake of the Church, and glory of *God* some other way, that hee might doe some service; as you see, it is playnly said of *Cyrus*, (*Isaiah*, fortie five, verse 4.) saith the Lord there, *for Iacob my servants sake, and for Israel*

rael mine people's sake I have called thee by name, and have given thee this great power, and all this great success, although thou thy selfe haue not knowne mee.
(Marke) Cyrus was a most prosperous man, Gods hand was mighty with him, and yet all this was not for his owne sake, but for the Churches sake: so you may thinke it is when men prosper, many times, it is not for their owne sakes, but to fulfill some other end of Gods providence, and therefore, marke this, and keepe it for a rule; if thou prosper in thy enterprizes, if thou enjoy wealth, and peace, and abundance of all things, and know that thou dost not seek to God from day to day, that thou keepest not thy heart right and straight, and perfect before him, thou dost not call upon him in an holy and spirituall manner; certainly it is for one of those causes, thou hast it without a blessing, and with a curse, thou hast it for other ends, and not for good to thy selfe; and therefore thou hast it very uncertainly, it may be tooke from thee, thou knowest not how soone; yea, and this thou shalt be sure of, that it shall be taken from thee then, when of all other times it will be unfittest for thee: as a tree comes at a time, when men least looke for him, so destruction comes suddenly upon these men: God cuts them, as a man when hee would have trees to die, he loppes them in that season, that of all others is the unfittest, when the sappe is in the tree, when the lopping will cause them to wither, so the Lord will strike them in such a season.

Note.

Simile.

Simile.

son. It is quite contrary with the Saints, he cuts them in due season, he loppes them in due time, that they may grow the better for it, it is good for them.

Answer to the second part of the objection.

But now for the other part of the objection, it may be, many among you are now ready to say, I have prayed for such and such things, and I have beene earnest, and yet the *Lord* hath denied me: My Beloved, if we can satisfie this objection, wee shall then take this impediment away, that wee propound in this objection, that hath these two parts. Therefore to this I answer:

Ans^r.

Our prayers are oft times amisse in one of these three respects.

First, in respect of the principle whence they flow, when they are but naturall desires,

First, if thou hast not beene heard in thy prayer, consider, if thou hast not *prayed amisse*; it is a common fault among us, when wee have spent much time in prayer, and it may be, wee have spent time in fasting and prayer, and the thing is not granted; wee presently lay it upon the *Lord*, that hee hath not heard, when many times the cause is in our not praying as wee ought: it may be thou hast beene very earnest, and therefore thou hopest thou hast done very well: I tell thee, thou maist be very earnest, and importunate with the *Lord*, when it may be no more but a naturall desire, when a man hath need to be directed in a difficult case, that much concerns him; when he hath need to be extricated, and taken out of such a difficulty, and strait, wherein he is involved, when he hath need of successe, in such an enterprise, or any thing of that nature; I say, a man may be earnest with the

Lord

Lord in such a case, and yet his prayer may be amisse, it may not be a spirituall prayer, it may not be an expression of holy desires to the *Lord*; for they onely prevaile with him: not that the naturall are excluded, (that is not my meaning) for they may adde windes to the sayles, though holinesse may guide the rudder, and keepe the course, and make the sterage, yet naturall desires may make us more importunate, and may adde much to it: therefore, I say, consider thy prayer.

Consider again, when thou hast fought so earnestly to *God*, whether it be not to bestow it upon thy lusts, as the Apostle speakes, *Iam. 4. 3.* when thou hast a businessse to be performed, it may be, thou art earnest with *God*, but hast thou not an eye to thy owne glory, to thine owne praise and credit in it? when thou wast earnest for health, was it not that thou mightest live more deliciously? when thou desirest wealth, and successe in thine enterprizes, that tend to mend thy state, is it not out of some ambition? you know, that desire is condemned, *If any man will be rich,* is it not a desire of greatnesse? would you not be some body in your place, and set up your house and family? Such things indeed *God* bestowes upon men, but to have our desires pitched upon them, and to pray for them in that sense, is amisse, and my rule for it is in the first to *Timothy* the sixth chapter, the ninth verse; *If a man will be rich, &c.* that is, when a man desireth excessively, when he desireth more than food, and

Naturall desires not excluded in in true prayer.

Simile.

Secondly, in respect of the end when they are for the satisfaction of our lusts. *Iam. 4. 3.*

2 Tim. 6. 9.

When the natural affection degenerates into a lust

Quest.

Ans.

How to know when we pray to bestow things on our lusts.

Simile.

say it is consequent for him (now the natural affection is degenerate into a lust: for when any affection succeeds, it ceaseth to be an affection, and begins to be a lust: and therefore where it is said, If any man will be rich, &c.) it is said after, it is a lust. But you will say, how shall a man know, when he prayeth to bestow that which he prayeth for, upon his lusts? I will answer, If a man consult with his owne heart, and deale impartially with himselfe, hee may know what his ends are, but if you cannot finde it out that way, you may know it by the effect, you may know it by the bills you bring in. What is the expence of these things? God hath bestowed on you, when hee hath put a price into your hands; consider how you bestow it. If a steward have a great summe of money, what his Master hath trusted him with, and his bills be, that hee hath bestowed so much in riot, so much in fine apparell; &c. but there hath beene but so much bestowed for his Masters advantage; it is an argument he hath spent it ill: so when wee see there hath beene so much health spent, so much time, and so much strength, in following our owne plots, and our owne worldly businesse, without respect to God, nor serving God, and men in our calling, as wee should doe, and that there hath beene little time bestowed in prayer, in reading, in making our hearts perfect with God, in taking paines with them from day to day, I say, if wee looke upon the bill of expence,

penance, and consider how we have bestowed our time, our health, our strength, our wits, from day to day, and our speech, (for that is one price that wee have in our hands, by which wee may doe good; it is as a bucket by which wee may draw from others, and likewise it is a spring, and fountaine, wherewith wee may feed others, with the waters of life) consider, how we have laid out all these things, and by that wee may know, how we are disposed to use the blessings we seeke for at Gods hands, whether wee seeke them to bestow them upon our lusts, or to spend those gifts to our Masters advantage; and, if we finde we doe it for our owne lusts, in this case, I say to you, goe and amend your prayers, and God will amend your speeding. We must doe in this case, as an angler doth when he hath throwne the bait into the river, if it stay long, and catch nothing, hee takes up the bait, and amends it, and when hee sees it well, hee then continues, and waites; so wee must doe in this case, if thou pray, and pray long, and have not obtained the thing thou prayest for, looke diligently to thy prayers, see whether they be right or no; if they be not, amend thy prayers, and God will amend his readinesse to heare thee; if thou finde they be sincere and hearty, mingled with holy desires, and not with carnall and corrupt affections, then let the bait lye still, that is, continue to pray, and to waite, and the Lord will come in due time.

But this is not all, though it bee one thing;

E 3

besides,

Simile.

Simile.

2

In respect of
the manner,
when they are
uttered care-
lessly.

What moves
God to doe us
good and evill.

Ans. 2.
God grants
our prayers oft
times, yet.

First, not in
that manner,
as we desire,

besides, when thou art not heard, consider, if thou hast not prayed amisse; it is a common fault amongst us; when we succeed not in any thing, wee attribute it to many other things; but not to our remissnesse and carelesnesse in seeking to God; if a man want sleepe, if hee finde sicknesse and weaknesse, and distemper of body, he thinks that he hath eaten amisse, and considers not whether he hath prayed amisse; if a man have miscarried in his businesse, hee begins to thinke, whether hee have not beene improvident, whether he hath not dealt foolishly, whether hee hath not omitted such and such meanes, as he might have used, he never thinks whether hee have prayed amisse; and that indeed is the cause of our miscarrying, and not commonly the thing which wee attribute it unto: for though God be not the immediate cause, you know hee is the great cause. *There is no ill, that he hath not done*: and that which moves him is alway grace and firme; that which moves him to doe us good, is our obedience to him; that which moves him to the contrary, is neglect on our parte.

But to answer further, suppose thy prayers bee right, yet thou must consider this, that when thou thinkest thou art not heard, thou art oft times deceived, and therefore you must rectifie that misconceit. As for example, sometimes when we would have the thing in one fashion, God bestowes the same thing upon us in another; and therefore thou maist be deceived in

in that; it may be, a man prayes earnestly, that hee may have a strong body, to doe *God* service withall, it may be, that sicknesse of body makes him doe him better service, because it keeps him in more awe, it weanes him more from the world, and makes him more heavenly minded. You know the case of *Paul*, he would faine have had that lust taken away that is spoken of, *2 Cor.* 12.9. and why? surely the thing he would have had, was to have his heart in an holy, and right frame of grace; now, though *Paul* had it not that way, that hee looked for it, yet hee hath it another way, the *Lord* increased in him the grace of humility by it, hee saw his owne weaknesse, and the power of *Christ* the more; and when this was discovered unto him, hee was content.

2 Cor. 12.9.

It is all one, whether a man be preserved from the blow of an enemy, or have an helmet given him to keepe it off: it may be a man prayes for money, and for estate; if *God* provide meat and drinke, and cloathes immediately, in stead of this, is it not all one? It may be another would have a greater degree of conveniency for his dwelling house, and many other things, if *God* give him a body able to endure that which is more course, all is one, as if he were provided for more delicately. It is all one, whether a *Physitian* quench the thirst of his patient, by giving him beere and drinke, that is comfortable unto him, or by giving him barberries, or somewhat else, that will doe the thing as well.

Simile.

Simile.

It is all one, whether the *Lord* keepe an enemy from doing us hurt, or that hee gives us a strong helmet, a buckler to keepe off the injurie from wounding of us: I might give you more instances, though the *Lord* give thee not the thing in the very manner that thou wouldest have it, yet hee will doe it in another manner.

a Manner these
meanes, which
we propound.

Instances.

Secondly, as we are deceived in the manner, so wee are deceived in the meanes oft times, in seeking to *God*. VVhen a man prayes, he pitcheth upon such a particular meanes, and thinkes verily that this is the way, or none; it may be the *Lord* will finde out another way, that thou diddest never dreaime of. *Paul* prayed to have a prosperous journey to *Rome*, hee little thought, that when he was bound at *Jerusalem*, and posted up and downe from one prison to another, *God* was now sending him to *Rome*, yet he sent him, and sent him very safe with a great company attending upon him, he sent him it may be in a better manner than hee himselfe would have gone, and yet it was by such a meanes, as he could never dreaime of. Also you know, *Naaman* the *Assyrian*, he had pitched upon a particular meanes, he thought the Prophet would have sorely come forth, and have laid his hands upon him, but to goe and wash in *Jordan*, he thought his labour all lost, and his request which hee made to the Prophet to no purpose, for it was a thing that hee never thought of, it was a weake and poore meanes, that hee made no account of, yet that was the meanes

meanes that *God* intended: so I say, wee oft deceive our selves, wee pitch upon such particular wayes, and when these faile us, and when wee have prayed, that these meanes might be used, and *God* doth not use them, wee thinke presently we are deceived: *Ioseph* thought verily *Pharaohs* *seruant* should have beene the meanes to bring the promise to passe, and after that, *Pharaohs* *butler* hee used as a meanes, he desired him to remember him, and yet all this was not the meanes, but another, which hee never thought of, which was a dreame of *Pharaohs*: the like was in the case of *Mordecai*, deliverance came a strange way, a way that *Mordecai* never imagined. *Abraham* thought verily that *Ismael* had beene the sonne of the promise, but *God* tells him hee was deceived, *Isaac* was the sonne, in whom he would make good the promise. So the *Israelites* thought that *Moses* should have delivered them, that it should have beene presently true, that the yoke of bondage should have beene presently taken off from them; but wee see *God* went another way to worke, hee sent *Moses* away into a farre Country, and the bondage was exceedingly increased upon them; so that they thought they were further off now than ever they were before; but in truth, they were nearer: for the increase of the bondage, increased *Pharaohs* sinne, and made him ripe for destruction. Again, it increased the peoples humility, it made them to pray harder, and to cry more fervently to *God* for deliverance, and so it made them more fit for it, and

Note this.

We attribute
too much to
meanes.

and at the last *Moses* was more fitted to bee a deliverer; after he was so long trained up, and was so much humbled, so that when *God* seemes to goe a cleane contrary way, yet it is the next way to bring it to passe. *Beloved*, it is a common thing with us, we pitch upon a certaine particular meanes, we thinke such a man must doe it, or such a course must doe it, when the *Lord* intends nothing lesse. And the reason often is, because, if wee should have deliverance, many times by such meanes, by such men, and by such wayes, wee would attribute too much to the meanes. Therefore, we see, when *Gedeon* had a great army, the *Lord* would not doe it, it was too great for him; and therefore we see to what a small number hee brought it: so oftentimes men thinke, oh if I had such a mans helpe, or if I had such a meanes, it would doe the thing, it would bring the enterprise to passe: when we make too much account of it, the *Lord*, it may be, casts away that, which seemed most probable, and (even as hee doth most of his workes, as hee builds his owne Kingdome, by the most foolish and improbable meanes of all other, so) often hee doth our businesse by such meanes, that wee least dreame of: therefore be not discouraged. Suppose we pray, that such a great Prince should raise the Churches, that such a warre, that such an enterprise, and project may doe it; put the case the *Lord* will not doe it so, are wee then presently undone: and is there no helpe, because such a

battaille is overrowne, because such a King did not succed; because such a Generall had not successe, according to our expectation: It may be that is not the way, the LORD will helpe the Church after another manner, that we dreame not of; and so for a mans selfe, hee hath businesse to be done, or hee is in distresse, and would have deliverance, and hee thinks this is the way, or none; and therefore hee is earnest to have it done: now it is good, in this case, to leave it to the LORD, to make our requests knowne to him; and when wee have done that, to be no further carefull, but leave it to the LORD, to doe it his owne way: hee is skilfull.

Simile.

If you take a skilfull workeman, and say no more to him but thus: Sir, I pray you, doe mee such a thing, if it were the bringing of water, or the setting up of a building, it may bee, hee will goe a way to worke, that thou knowest not what it meanes, and yet thou wilt trust him: why then wilt thou not trust God, and suffer him to goe his owne way? and when thou art crossed in that thing, wherein, it may be, of all others, thou wouldest not be crossed, it may be, it is the best way of all other, to bring the thing to passe, that thou desirest.

Again, as wee are deceived in the manner, and the meanes, so likewise wee mistake the time: it may bee the LORD is willing to doe the thing, but not in that time, that thou wouldest

Thirdly, or not
in our time.

Simile.

Wee must not
take Gods de-
layes for deni-
alls.

Note.

Why God de-
ferres to an-
swer us.

Note.

dest have him. When a man prayes to be delivered from such a trouble, and such a distresse and affliction, hee thinkes the time very long, and saith, hee is not heard, because hee is not delivered presently: wee would all have the smearing plaister presently tooke off, but the Lord is wiser than wee, (as the Physitian knowes what belongs to the patient better than himselfe) though hee doe it not presently, yet hee will doe it. Therefore say not, thou art not heard, thou must take heed of taking delayes for denials, the Lord will deferre to doe the thing, yet hee will doe it, and doe it in the best season: for this is a generall rule, *Gods time is the best time.* VVhen thou comest to pray for a thing, thou wouldest have it done presently, and thou thinkest it is the best time, all the controversie betwene God, and thee is, which is the fittest time to have it done, thou thinkest it may be presently, God, it may bee, will doe it a yeare hence; surely hee is the best chooser, and wee shall finde it so. And therefore be content to waite his leisure; hee hath many ends in deferring it, it may be to try thy faith, (as hee did the faith of the *Canaanite*,) and therefore hee would not heare; it may bee to increase thy holinesse, to put thy heart into a better temper, and therefore hee defers longer. Hee meant to doe that for *Isaac*, that hee did, yet he suffered *Isaac* to *wrestle all night*, and yet he would not doe it till the instant of the morning appeared: so it was with *Daniel*, the an-
swer

swer went forth when hee began to pray, yet hee would have him instant, and continue in prayer; so (Ifay) the Lord hath many ends why hee deferrēs, let us be content to take his owne time.

Last of all, consider this when thou seekest to the Lord, to have any thing done; it is possible that it may crosse some other passage of his providence; and in this case thou shouldest be content to be denied.

But, you will say, why may not both be accommodated?

I answer, so they shall, though thou see not how; it is not with GOD as it is with man: if a man doe a good turne to one, when two become petitioners, hee must needs doe an ill turne to another, but GOD composeth all for the best.

As for example, DAVID desired much to build a Temple, the LORD had another end, hee had resolved in his providence to make SALOMON the builder of it, indeed this was much better for DAVID: for what more had DAVID gotten, if he had done it? the LORD gave him as full a reward, as if hee had done it: for hee tells him, that for that purpose of building him an house, he would build him an house: so DAVID had his end to the full, though SALOMON build the Temple. So for ISRAEL, the LORD kept the CANAANITES among them, but it was for their profit: there are some passages of GODS providence, that if wee knew,

Answ. 3.
Our prayers
may crosse
some passage
of Gods provi-
dence.

Objct.

Answ.

Simile.

knew, wee would yeeld to this, that it were
better, that it should bee so, than other-
wise; and therefore it is better,
in some case, that we should
bee denied.

So much for this time.

F J N J S.



THE



THE THIRD SERMON.

1 THES. 5. 17.

Pray continually.



Now wee proceede to that which remaines, something more we might adde, for the answering of this, for the time of Gods granting our petitions, and for the measure, wee touched it the last day a little.

For the time, wee are deceived; in that wee thinke, when God deferres, he denies; for many times God deferres for speciall reasons, and yet he grants the request, in the fittest time for us, as the phyfician knoweth the fittest time to give the patient phyficke of one kinde or another; and in this

See page 59.

Simile.

Simile.

Rev. 2. 10.

Note.

Four reasons
of Gods defer-
ring to grant
our requests.

I

To try our
faith.

To humble us
more.

this wee must yeeld to God; as hee doth all his
workes in the fittest time, so hee grants our pe-
titions in the fittest time; there is an appointed
time for any deliverance to be granted, for any
blessing, for any comfort that we need, and
have at his hands. Now, if your selves were Iud-
ges, wee would have things done for us in the
most inconvenient time, wee would have the
smarting plaister pulled off, before the wound be
healed, whereas it is best for us to have it kept
on: *Beloved, you shall finde, that God divides be-
tweene Satan and us, in this case, as we see Rev.*
2. 10. Satan shall cast some of you into prison, and
you shall be there for ten dayes: it was not so long
as Satan would have had it, it may be, he would
have had it ten and ten too; nor againe, it was
not so short as God would have had it, but God
sets downe the time betweene them both: and
therefore we must rest upon him, and thinke that
many times there is great reason, why we should
be deferred, when wee aske things at his hands;
and you shall finde hee deferres for one of these
causes, for the most part:

Sometimes, for the tryall of our faith, as wee
see, he deferred to grant to the woman of Canaan,
although he did meane to grant her request, yet
he deferred long, that he might put her to the
tryall; and you see, she was no loser by it, but
when she held out in her prayers, she had her re-
quest granted to the full.

Sometimes, hee deferres to grant it, that we
may be more humbled, as you know, *Paul* prayed
earnestly

earnestly, but *God* tould him, that hee would deferre him, because he needed more humiliry: so he deferred to grant the request, that the men of *Israel* put up to him against *Benjamin*, when the cause was just, and *God* intended to helpe them, yet they fell before their enemies twice, though they fasted, and prayed; his end was, as wee see in the text, that they might be more humbled, that their hearts might be more broken, that they might be more fitted to receive it.

Againe, sometimes *God* deferrers, that we might bee more able to use those blessings that hee meanes to bestow upon us so: hee deferred to raise *Ioseph* to preferment: so hee deferred to bring *David* to the Kingdome, that those afflictions that they endured might the better fit them to enjoy so great prosperity, as he had provided for them afterwards.

And lastly, he defers, that hee might set a higher price upon his blessings, that hee might inhaunce the price of them; as the fisher drawes away the bait, that the fish might follow it the more: so *God* withholds blessings, that wee might have a greater edge set upon our desires, that wee might pray harder for them, that wee might prize them more, when wee have obtained them.

Now, as hee doth thus for the time, and as wee are often deceived in the time, in taking delayes for denials; so likewise wee are often deceived in the measure: many times *God* grants the things that wee would have; but because wee

F

have

3
To enable us
to use his blessings when we
have them.

4
To make us to
prize his blessings.
Simile.

Concerning
the measure, if
God give us
not so much as
we aske.

have not so large a measure as we expect; therefore wee thinke wee have it not at all, and that the Lord hath denied us our prayers; when indeed hee hath not: for a lesser measure, many times, may serve as well as a greater: as God saith to Paul, *My grace is sufficient for thee.* Though the temptation doe abide upon us, if there be sufficient grace to keepe us in a continuall conflict, and warre against it, if there be sufficient grace to obtaine pardon, to uphold, and to comfort us in it, it is sufficient, it may bring us to heaven, we have a deliuerance from it, even when we seeme not to be delivered; though wee have not so full a victory, as we would have, yet that grace may be sufficient.

You shall see this almost in all the things wee have occasion to request at Gods hands, that a lesser measure may serve as well as a greater. Take it first in outward things.

A little wealth may serve as well as great revenues, as in Psal. 37. 16. *A little that the righteous hath is as much as great revenues to the wicked:* because a little, when God shall fill it with his blessings, it shall serve the turne as well; but, if a man hath great revenues, and God blowes upon them, and leaves an emptinesse in them; if a man have great revenues, if hee have great outward comforts, yet if there be an emptinesse, if there be a vanity in them, if they be as the huske without the graine, as the shell without the kernell, as they are often, though there be a great bulke, and they seeme very fit to comfort us, yet they will

A lesse measure
may serve as
well as a greater.

Cleared in instances.

1 Wealth
Psal. 37. 16.

Simile.

will doe us little good; whereas a little, on the other side, will doe much good: for in this case it is as it was with *Manna*, *Those that had little, yet they had sufficient, and those that gathered over, yet they had never a whit the more*: that is, for their use and comfort. You know, the little that *Daniel* had, it nourished and strengthened him, as much as the great portion of the Kings meat, that others had; and therefore a little, in this kinde, may serve as well as much.

a Instance in grace.

And so likewise, a little grace may be so used, and improved, that it may enable you to doe much, it may preserve you from sinning against God, as well as a great measure. For the confirmation of this looke to *Rev. 3. 8.* which is a notable place for this purpose: it is said there to the Church of *Philadelphia*, *Thou hast a little strength*, they had but a little strength, and yet you see there what that little strength did: *Thou hast but a little strength, and yet thou hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name*: There were but two things for them to doe, to keepe his word, and to be kept from running out to the deniall of his name, and other sinnes: now the little strength they had, was sufficient for these ends. So that we see, hee findes no fault with that Church; other Churches, that had more strength, it may be, they fell into greater sinnes. But this is a rule which is true, you will finde it true in all observations through the Scriptures, That sometimes those that have great grace, yet they may fall into great sinnes, they may be subject

Rev. 3. 8.

Those that have more grace may fall, when weak ones stand.

to some strong prevailing lust; as *David*, you know, had a great grace, and yet, wee see, he was subject to great sinnes together with it.

And againe, a man may have but a little grace, and yet that little grace may be so ordered, and husbanded, and improved, that that little grace may keepe him from sinne, more than the other. This must be warily understood, not but that great grace enables a man to doe greater workes, than the other, it enables a man, in the ordinary course, to resist greater temptations, more than lesse grace; but yet, (I say for our comfort, that) though a man have but a little strength, yet, as it is said there in the same place, *Rev. 3.* in that little strength, *I have set a doore open to thee*, it opened the doore of heaven wide enough, so that no man could shut it.

Note in what
sense this isto
be taken,

Rev. 3.

3 Instance in
gifts,

Simile.

And as wee say of grace, so likewise for gifts, smaller gifts, meane gifts may serve the turne many times, as well as greater gifts: for, you know, a little finger, a small hand may serve to thread a needle, as well as a greater, and, it may be, will doe it better; for in the Church there are varieties of operations, and variety of functions, and meane gifts may serve for the discharge of some operations, of some services, for the Church as well as greater. And therefore, as there are variety of functions, so there are variety of members, some stronger, some weaker and the weaker may serve, in some cases, as well as the stronger; a little Barke may doe better in a small river, than a greater shippe; so a man that

Simile.

hath

bath but meane gifts may serve meane capacities, as well as greater, and better: and therefore thinke not that things are denyed, when the thing is granted, not in such a measure. And lastly, to be faithfull in a little gift will bring as great a reward, as to be faithfull in greater. *Then hast been faithfull in little, may make a man ruler over much*, and may bring a great increase of the talents after. Therefore let not a man be discouraged, if he have not so great a measure as others have. So likewise if a man desire patience and and strength, to goe through all variety of conditions, through all the troubles he meets with: sometimes the Lord layes a great burthen upon a mans shoulders, and gives him great strength to beare it; sometimes againe hee gives but a little strength, but then hee proportions the burthen to it; and is it not all one, whether the burthen be great, and the strength answerable, or the burthen be lesse, and the strength little? Sometimes he takes away calamity, sometimes hee layes it upon a man, and gives him as much strength as will beare it, and that is as good as if it were removed; else, what is the meaning of that, *You shall have an hundred fold with persecution*, but that you shall have so much joy, and strength in persecution, that it shall be all one as if you wanted it? So we see *Heb. 3. 7.* when Christ prayed for deliverance, in that great houre of triall, the text saith, *He was heard in the things he feared*, and yet, we see, the cup did not passe from him, because hee was strengthened to beare it,

Faithfulness in little brings as great a reward as in more.

4 Instance, in crosses and afflictions.

~ Simile.

Heb. 3. 7.

Note.

and so it is in this case. And so much shall serve for a full answer to that, that wee be not mistaken in judging our prayers not to be heard, when they are heard.

And now, *Beloved*, what remains but that wee set our selves to the duty, to doe that wee are exhorted unto here, namely to *Pray continually*, that is, to pray very much, to keepe at least a constant course in it; for, if we doe neglect it, wee doe but robbe *God* of his mercies, we take them without his leave.

Again, we are guilty of the sinne of unthankfulness: for we ought to *give thanks in all things*.

Again, we neglect his worship, for you know prayer is a part of his worship, and the neglect of it from day to day, or at any time, when we omit it, is a neglect of that worship and service we owe unto him.

Again, wee suffer sin to lye unforgiven, which is very dangerous: we deprive our selves of blessings, and bring a curse upon our selves, and wee suffer our hearts to grow hard, and to be distempered: for from our neglect of prayer comes that deadnesse of spirit, that worldly mindednesse, and unapiness to pray, to heare the word, and to keepe the Sabbath, what else is the reason of it? Why those that have beene forward and zealous professors, in former times, have lost their light, and fallen from their place; I say, what is the reason of it, when they were sometimes *servant in spirit serving the Lord*? That fire was not kept alive with the fuell of prayer, and when

Dangers of
omitting, or
neglecting
prayer.

I

2

3

4

5

6

Why men de-
cline in their
grace.

when they declined from that pitch, from that degree of faith, which they had obtained, you shall finde it commonly to arise from remissnesse in this duty. Therefore wee say to such, *Repent, and amend, and doe your first workes*; that is, use your former diligence, renew that, and that will renew grace and strength againe: therefore take heed of being negligent, and remisse in this duty. Wee have great cause to be encouraged to it, for there is not a faithfull prayer that wee make shalbe lost, but they come up into remembrance. And therefore you must consider with yourselves, not onely what you doe for the present, but what stocke of prayers you have laid up. You know, a man may have much in bills and bonds, as well as, in present money; so there is a certaine stocke of prayers, a certaine treasure laid up, that shall not be forgotten. The husbandman looks not only upon the graine that he hath in his garner, but hee looks upon that which is sowne, though it be out of his hand; yea, he reckons that the better of the two; so those prayers that have beene sowed, (it may be, many yeares agoe) are such as will bring in a sure increase. Therefore let us be exhorted to be constant in this duty, to be frequent therein, to *continue in it, watching there- to with perseverance.*

And now wee have dispatched this wee will come to answer some cases of conscience that fall out in the performance of this duty, which are divers:

First, this is one; What shall a man judge of his

Benefit of frequency, and diligence in prayer.

No faithfull prayer is lost.

Simile.

Simile.

Nine cases of conscience concerning prayer.

Case. I.

About wand-
ring thoughts
in prayer.

Ans.

I
The cause of
them is weak-
nesse.

Simile.

Simile.

Simile.

his prayers, when they are accompanied with wandering thoughts, whether those prayers are such as God wholly refuseth, or what hee is to doe in such a case, when he is subject to wandering thoughts, to vanity of minde, and distemper in the performance of that duty.

To this I answer, that wee must distinguish of the cause whence these wandering thoughts arise.

Sometimes they arise, not so much from our owne neglect, as from weaknesse, from temptation; and in such a case God layes them not so much to our charge. As for example, one that aymes at a marke, and doth his best to hit the marke, yet, if he hath a hand, or an arme, that hath the palsey in it, or if one jogge him while he is about it, the fault was not so much in him, it was not want of good will to doe it, nor want of diligence; but either it is his weaknesse, or it is an impediment cast in by another: so it is in this case, this wandering of minde proceeds from a naturall infirmity and imbecillity, that hangs upon the nature of man, which is not so able to keepe it selfe close to such a spirituall businesse: and this, God considers, for he is wise, and knows that we are but flesh. When a weak servant goes about a businesse, though hee doe it not so well as a stronger, yet a man is wise to consider, that the servant is but weak: the Lord considers the naturall weaknesse that we are subject unto, and he deales mercifully with us, in such a case: for herein a man is as one that hath a bow in his hand

hand, but he hath a palsey arme, and therefore he cannot keepe it steady, though he have a minde to doe it

But the other case is, when he is jogged in his shooting by another, that is, when Satan interrupts him, when he is diligent to hinder him in such a duty; in this case, God chargeth it not upon him, and doth not cast us off, nor reject our prayers, because of that: but on the other side, when this wandering of minde shall rise from meeke negligence on our part, from profanenesse, from want of reverence, because we doe not intend holy duties as wee ought, wee come not to them with that conscionablenesse, with that carefulnesse as we should doe, in this case now, it is a great sinne, this mooves the Lord to anger, when wee performe the dutie in that manner, when we doe not so much as set our selves about it with our strength, but suffer our mindes to wander without any resistance.

Or secondly, when we our selves be the cause of it, by admitting of loose thoughts, by suffering our selves to be wordly minded, by suffering an indisposition to grow upon us, and not labouring to resist it, and cast it off againe. You know, when an instrument is out of tune, if the lesson be never so good that is played upon it, yet it is unpleasant, because the instrument is out of tune; and whose fault is that? So, when thou comest to God, and sufferest thy heart to be disordered before, and doest not looke to keepe it in order, that is thy sin, as well as thy profanenesse, and

2. Temptation

3. Negligence.

4. Voluntary admitting of vaine thoughts.

Simile.

How to prevent wandering thoughts in prayer.

Simile.

Case 2.
About indispofednesse, & dulnesse, and unaptnesse to prayer

Anfw. I.

Objct.

Anfw.

and neglect in the very time of the performance : And by this you may learne , how to judge of wandring thoughts in the performance of this duty , and likewise you may see how to prevent them . The way to prevent them , is to keepe our hearts in tune before , to have them ready , as *the wise man hath his heart at his right hand* , that is , he hath it ready when he hath it to use . When a man is to use his horse , he doth not suffer him to runne up and downe in the pastures wildely , but will have him under bridle ; so we should keepe our hearts in frame , that they may be ready to doe us service in such an holy duty , when wee have need of them .

Secondly , we must be diligent , when we come to performe the duty , that though our mindes doe wander , yet we may be ready to recall them presently , to set our selves to it with all diligence . So much for answering of this first case .

The second Case is , what a man is to doe , when hee findes a great indisposition to prayer , such a dulnesse and deadnesse in him , that hee knowes not how to goe about the duty , and he thinkes , if he doe it , it were as good be undone .

To this I answer briefly , that in all such cases , a man is bound notwithstanding to performe it , let his heart be never so much out of temper , let there be never so great a dulnesse , and deadnesse of spirit upon him , yet he is bound to doe it .

But you will say , Why , but I am altogether unfit .

I answer , That a man by setting himselfe upon the

the worke, shall gather a fittest, though he were unfit at the first. You know, members, that are benumbed, yet by using them, they get life and heat, and come, in the end, to be nimble enough; so it is with the heart, in this case, when it is benumbed, the very using of it makes it fit for the duty. You know, wood, though it be Greene, yet, if it be long blowed, at the length it will be dry, and take fire; so it is with the heart, a man may be long about getting it on the wing, yet with much adoe hee may doe it; and therefore he ought to doe this duty in such a case; yea so much the rather, because there is never more need of calling upon God, than at such a time: for then a man lyes most exposed to temptation, then, if any sinne come, he is ready to be overtaken with it, hee is unfit for any thing: and therefore, if ever he have need to call upon God, it is at that time.

But you will say, It may be God will not accept it.

I answer briefly, Although a mans heart be so indisposed, that when he hath done all hee can, yet hee can get no life, hee can get no heat in the performance of such a duty, yet God may accept that prayer, as well as that which is most fervent. And that you may understand this aright, you must take it with this distinction:

This dulnesse and deadnesse in prayer, it comes from one of these two causes:

One is, when God withdrawes his owne spirit, that is, withdrawes not his spirit altogether; (for there may be an helpe, when we perceive it

not

Simile.

Simile.

Never more
need to pray,
than when we
are most indis-
posed.

Note.

Object.

Ans.

Causes of dul-
nesse.

1 Discretion.

2. From negli-
gence.

When indispo-
sition is no
hinderance,

Case 3
About praying
after a man
hath committed
some grosse
sinne.

not ybut when he withdrawes the livenessse, and quickness of his spirit, and in this case, if we doe our duty, if wee doe the best wee can, the Lord doth accept it, though hee hath not vouchsafed such enlargement of our hearts, though he hath not powred out his spirit upon us, in the performance of the durie, as at other times, but he gives a secret helpe, that perhaps we feele not, nor perhaps is so great as at other times; yet I say, when it ariseth from his owne withdrawing of that fitnessse, and wee are not negligent, which is the other cause, I say, when we are not negligent, but we doe our best, in this case *God accepteth the will for the deed*, as we have often said to you that rule alway holds good, when the impediment is such as we cannot remove, when the dullness of spirit is such as it is not in our power to remove, when we have vsed our utmost diligence, in that case it is no hinderance. And therefore it is a great comfort unto us, that we have used our diligence in this duty, when we have used our best to quicken our hearts, though it be not done, yet God accepts our prayers, as well as if they were performed in a more lively and fervent manner.

The next case is, what a man is to doe after he hath committed some great sinne, after he hath wounded his conscience, whether then, notwithstanding hee must come, and keepe his constant course in praying, morning and evening, whether he shall be so bold, as to come into Gods presence, after he hath so exceedingly offended him.

To this I answer, that a man is bound, (not with-

withstanding any sinne that hee hath committed, be it what it will bee,) to keepe this course constantly in prayer, and not to omit it, not to keepe off, not to deferre it. And my ground for it is, because this is a duty, it is a charge, that God hath laid upon all, to *Pray continually*; that is, at the least twice a day, as we shewed before, to keepe a constant course in it. Now it is certaine, our failing in one thing must not excuse us in another: when the dutie lyes on us, we have no dispensation to be negligent in it, and therefore we are bound to doe it.

Againe, consider this, that a particular offence doth not offend so much, as if we grow strangers to God, as if wee grow to a generall rebellion against him. As, put the case, a childe commits a great offence against his father, yet, if he runne away from his fathers house, and grow a stranger to him, that is more than the particular offence: for a generall rebellion must needs be more than the particular. And to give over calling upon God, to breake off that course, to grow a stranger to him, to runne away from his house, and (as it were) to be ready to give over all his ordinances, & a constant course of obedience to him; this is a generall rebellion, & is worse than the particular, yea such carriage, after sin committed, moves God to anger more than the sinne it selfe: as many times, the contemptuous, negligent, rebellious carriage, after an offence, moves a master, a husband, or a parent more than the particular failing though it were exceeding great.

Besides,

In this case prayer is not to be neglected.

Reason 1
It is Gods command.

Note.

Reason 2
Neglect in this is worse than the sinne we committed before.

Reason 3
It leaves the
breach in the
conscience
open.

If wee recover
not quickly
out of a sinne,
wee adde more
to it.

Quest.

Ans.

Besides, consider when a man commits a great sinne, he makes a great gappe in his conscience, he makes a great breach there, and will you have that breach lye open? is not that very dangerous? is not that the way to bring in more sinne, and to suffer those good things that are in the heart to steale out? I will give you but one instance for this: You see, *S. Peter*, when he had committed a great sinne, in denying his Master, and forswearing of him too, yet, because hee came in presently, and repented, and sought pardon, (as you know hee did) you see, hee was preserved from running into further arrerages: for hee made up the gappe, hee made up the breach.

Wee see, on the other side, when *David* had committed that sinne with *Bathsheba*, and did not come unto *God*, as hee should have done, to keepe his ordinary course in sacrificing unto him, in repenting, and renewing his repentance, and praying to him, you know, how many sinnes hee fell into. And likewise that was the case of *Salomon*, you know, to what a height hee grew, by not comming to *God*, at his first falling: And therefore, I say, there is reason, that wee should doe it, though the sinne bee great wee ought to come in, and to keepe our course constantly.

But may I not stay, till I be more fitted; till my heart bee more softened; and more humbled?

Beloved, to stay in this case is dangerous, for the

the heart commonly growes more hard in continuance; the conscience is more tender, immediately after the sinne is committed, than it is afterwards; and when thou stayest for more humiliry thou findest lesse: And therefore, while the wound is greene, and when the fire hath taken newly hold, it is then best to quench it, before the wound be festered, before it hath continued long; for the heart will grow worse and worse, as it is *Heb. 3. 12.* *Take heed that you be not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne:* The meaning is this, when you commit a sinne, you thinke, if you stay a weeke, or a fortnight, or a moneth, you shall come in as well as at the first; no, saith the Apostle, *While it is to day, come in,* that is, doe it presently, for sinne will deceive you, it will harden your heart before you be aware, it will make a distance betweene God and you, it will take you off from him, it will leade you further on: and therefore take heed, that your hearts bee not hardened through the deceitfulnesse of sinne, that sinne doe not deceive you, and it will doe it before you thinke of it. And therefore in this case you should doe as you doe with waters; when waters breake out a little, it is best to stop them presently, if you suffer them, they will make the breach greater, till at length you bee unable to stop them: so in this case, when you have committed a great sin, come in speedily.

But you will say, What, shall a man come into Gods presence, who is most holy, after he hath defiled

Staying for
sinnes after sin
committed, we
become more
unfit.

Heb. 3. 12.

Simile.

Object.

filed himselfe with some great sinne, is not this an irreuerent thing?

Ans.

We must come to God with a disposition turned from sin.

I answer briefly, it is very true, if thou be bold to come into Gods presence with the same disposition wherewith the sinne was committed, with a minde so fashioned, and so framed, in that case thou doest exceedingly provoke him, this is a very high degree of profanenesse: and therefore, when wee say, thou must come in, and keepe a constant course in prayer notwithstanding, the meaning is, you must come in with a disposition turned aside from your sins, and brought home to God, with a minde to abhorre that which is euill, and to cleave to that which is good, there must bee this conversion of the minde to him, thou must not come in with the same disposition, that must be altered. So much shall serue for the answer to this case.

Case 4
About a set
forme of prayer.

Ans.

Another case is, whether wee may use a set forme of prayer: and likewise whether it be sufficient?

I need not say much to you, for I thinke there is none here that doubt of it, but that a set forme of prayer may be used: you know, Christ prescribed a forme, you know, there were certaine *psalmes* that were prayers, that were used constantly; and therefore there is no doubt but that a set forme may be used, we have that example for it: And in the Church, at all times, in the primitive times of the Church, and all along to the beginning of the reformed times, to *Luther* and *Calvins* time, still in all times the Church

had

had set formes they used, and I know no objection against it of weight. One maine objection is this:

That in stinced prayer the spirit is strained, when a man is tyed to a forme, then hee shall have his spirit, as it were, bounded and limmited, that hee cannot goe beyond that which is prescribed; and therefore, say they, it is reason a man should be left to more libertie, (as hee is in conceived prayers,) and not tyed to a strict forme.

To this I answer, even those men that are against this, and that use this reason, they doe the same thing dayly in the congregation: for when another prayes, that is a set forme to him that heares it; I say, it is a forme to him. For put that case, that he that is a hearer, that heares another pray, suppose that his spirit bee more enlarged, it is a straining to him, he hath no liberty to goe out, he is bound to keepe his minde intent upon it: And therefore, if that were a sufficient reason, that a man might not use a set form, because the spirit is strained, a man should not heare another pray (though it be a conceived prayer) because, in that case, his spirit is limited; it may be, the hearer hath a larger heart, a great deale, than hee that speakes and prayes: so that there is a bounding, and straining, and a limiting of the spirit. And therefore that reason cannot be good.

Againe, I answer, though the spirit be limited, at that time, yet hee hath a libertie, at other

G

times,

Object.

Ans. I.
They that object against a set forme of prayer, doe the same thing

Note.

Ans. 2.
Wee have liberty at other times.

times, to pray as freely as he will in private; and therefore he is not so tyed, but though at that time he be, yet it is no generall tye; at another time, or immediatly after, he may be as free as he will in secret.

Ans. 3.

The spirit is not restrained in a set forme of prayer.

Againe, I answer, it is not a tye, and a restraint of the spirit, because there is a tye of words; for the largeness of the heart stands not so much in the multitude and variety of expressions, as in the extent of the affection: now then the heart may be very large, for all that; though he be tyed in words, yet there is not a tye upon the affection, that may be extended more, in putting up the same petition; when another mans is more strained: therefore there is no tye, and limit upon that. And this is enough to satisfie that, that a set forme of prayer must be used.

Quest.

Though a set forme may be used in prayer, yet that alone is not sufficient.

Ans.

But now, if you aske, whether that be sufficient: whether a man may thinke, if he have been present at publike Prayer, (which is a commendable thing to use constantly) I say, whether that be sufficient.

My Beloved, this is a matter of some moment, to consider what wee ought to doe in this case, for we may be deceived in it; and I answer plainly, It is not sufficient: A man that is diligent in publike prayers, that keeps them morning and evening, if hee thinks now hee hath discharged his duty, hee is in a very great errour: and this is the reason, because they are not sufficient. Indeed, they are to be used, for God is worshipped in them, and it is a more publike worship: and when

when *God* is honoured before many (as a man, when there are many spectators, more honour is done to him) it is a greater honour, so it is when men joyne in this worship. And many other reasons there be, but that is not the thing, I am now upon, to commend it to you, but I say, it is not sufficient, although it ought to be done, because there are many particular sinnes, which cannot be confessed in publike prayer, there are many particular wants, which in publicke prayer you cannot unfold, and open, and expresse unto the *Lord*.

Againe, the end of a set forme of prayer is to be an helpe for the private, (for the publike it is another case) a helpe that one may use that is yet exceeding weake: a child, that cannot goe, may have such a proppe, but we must not alway bee children, we must not alway use that helpe.

Besides, we must consider this, that there is no man that hath any worke of grace in his heart, but he is enabled in some measure to pray, without a set forme of prayer, he is able to expresse his desires to *God* in private, one way or other: There was never any man in any extreame want, but he knew how to expresse himselfe, where he had libertie to speake: so it is in this case.

Besides, the spirit of a man hath greater liberty in private; there a man may pour forth his soule to the *Lord*, as *Hanna* saith, *1 Sam. 1.* which in publicke hee cannot doe freely: there are many particular mercies, which he hath cause to bee thankfull to *God* for.

Simile.

5 Reasons proving that a set forme of prayer is not sufficient.

Reason 1.

Reason 2.

Simile.

Reason 3.

Reason 4.

1 Sam. 1.

Reason 5.

The end why
prayer is used,

Besides, there is a particular paines that a man is to take with his heart, from day to day, which in the publike common petitions, hee is not able to doe: for, *Beloved*, know this, that the prayer, that is required from day to day, is not so much the performance of the duty, the doing of the taske, but the end is to keepe the heart in order; for if sinfull lusts grow upon it, and distempers, and worldly mindednesse, the end of this duty is to work them out againe, to renew repentance againe; and when there is a forgetfulnesse of the covenant, when grace growes weake, when good desires begin to languish, to renew, and recover them, to put fuell to them: and this is not done by the performance of the publike onely. And therefore, I say, though you performe it in your families, and meet in the Congregation, you must not thinke that this is enough, you are bound to a private performance of this duty.

Case 9
About using
the voice, and
about the ge-
sture in secret
prayer.

Answer.

Again, this is another Case, what a man is to doe in the private performance of this duty, whether he be bound alwayes to use his voice? whether hee be bound alwayes to such a kinde of gesture?

I answer this briefly, (for there is no great difficulty in these things, and therefore I passe them over) for the gestare in publike, there is more heed to be taken of that, because it is a publike and open worship of God; and therefore in publike the gesture is alway to be reverent. You know how often it is repeated, (in the old te-
stament

ament especially) that they bowed downe, and worshipped still, Christ looked up to heaven, Paul knelted downe, and the rest with him, and prayed, and many such like expressions you have mentioned in the Scriptures: where you have prayer mentioned in publike, still you shall finde an expression of some reverent gesture, and when we appeare before the Lord in the publike performance of this duty, especiall care must be taken herunto. In the private, the case is different, there variety of gestures may be used; I doe not see but all variety of gestures may be used; there are many examples for walking, and lying, and sitting: onely this is to be taken heed to, that even in private, as farre as may be, the gesture be such, as may both expresse the inward reverence in the heart, and of the outward man; but there is a liberty in that: I thinke this is the best rule in private, that that gesture be used, that doth most quicken, & doth help the duty most. Some gesture may bring a dulnesse, and indisposition, when another may quicken the body, and make it more fit for prayer: sometimes lying is inconvenient, and sometimes more convenient: And therefore, in this case, the best rule is to use that gesture, which quickens most, which helps most the duty. Some gestures may breed a wearinesse in the body, some may breed a dulnesse; some are painful to the body: all this is a hindrance to the duty, when the change of it may quicken and helpe.

Now for the voice, I say, for thar, (as for the gesture)

G 3

Note.

That gesture is to be used in private prayer that doth most quicken.

Iohn 4. 24.

Angels how
they speake to
God, and one
another.

James 3. 9.

Why the voice
is used in pray-
er.

gesture) it is not simply requyred: for *God is a spirit, and he will be worshipped in spirit*, Men that have eares, and bodies, they must have men speake to them: but *God*, that is a spirit, delights in that which is like himselfe; and therefore all his eye is upon the inward behaviour of the spirit. Besides the spirit may speake to *God*, when the voice doth not; as, you know, the *Angels* speake to *God*, and they speake one to another. The Schoolemē have great disputes about the speech of *Angels*, but this they agree in, that one *Angel* speakes to another after this manner: When any one hath a conceit in his mind of any thing, with a will that another should understand it, and that *God* should understand it, that is enough for the expression of it; so is it with the spirit of a man, when he hath such a petition in his heart, in his minde, and there is a desire in his will, that *God* should understand that petition; that is an offering it up to the *Lord*, it is as true a speaking to the *Lord*, as when you deliver it by an outward voice, for the spirit agrees with the *Angels*, as it is a spirit, and as they speake one to another, and to the *Lord*: so doth the spirit of man; though indeed the tongue be to be used, as it is, *Iam. 3. 2.* *Therewith blisse me God*, and therewith should we pray among others, and before others, and speake before others; but when there is any cause to use the voice in private, it is this, as farre as it may quicken the heart, (as I said of gesture) and as farre as thereby wee may keepe our thoughts from wandering. If the voice were

were not used, perhaps, the thoughts would be
subject to more wandring, and we should not be
ready to take notice of them, but they would
slip before wee are aware: and therefore when
the voice is used it must bee to keepe in the
thoughts. In some cases, to omit the voice is
more convenient, when it may draw any other
inconveniencie; but that is left to every
mans particular case, as he shall finde the
use of it to hinder him, or further
him. And so much shall serve
for this Case.

F I N I S.



G 4 THE



THE
FOURTH
SERMON.

2 THESS. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

Cafe 6.

About want of
leasure to pray,
by reason of
present busi-
nesses, to be
speedily dis-
patched.



Nother Cafe of conscience (in the
business of prayer) is, what a man
is to doe, when hee is in strait of
time, by reason of some weighty
business, that requires a quicke
and sudden dispatch, and gives him not the lea-
sure and liberty, that otherwise hee might have
had :

To this I answer, you shall finde, that in Scrip-
tures the prayers of Saints have beene some-
times larger, and sometimes shorter. Our Savi-
our *Christ*, you know, sometimes spent a whole
night

night in prayer; Surely he did not take so much time alwayes, and no doubt, wee have libertie sometimes to be larger, sometimes shorter, according as our occasions will permit. But yet this you must remember, that though the businesse be great, yet that businesse, that concerne the salvation of our soules, and the worship of God, is greater: And therefore, except it bee a true strait, this is still to bee preferred; for it is a businesse of greater moment: and therefore you must give a just weight to your businesse, and not suffer every small businesse that comes in to thrust out this duty: for here you keepe not the due proportion, but neglect the greater, and take the lesse.

Besides, doe you not say, when you have great businesse in hand, that a man must have a dining time, and a sleeping time, &c. Why may wee not say as well, A man must have a praying time, is it not necessary? You know what *Isaiah* saith, you know the course that he kept in reading the word, (for that is cleere ment in that place,) *It was more precious to him than his appointed food:* that is, he had rather omit his usuall meales, (for that hee meanes by his appointed food) than to omit a constant course in performing those holy duties. Therefore, I say, it ought carefully to be tooke heed of, that wee omit it not, except it be a very great strait; if it be, wee may be short in it, God tyes us not so exactly you see therein rules are not set downe in the Scriptures, where- in we are tyed precisely to such an houre, so such a time

Matters concerning salvation to be preferred before outward businesse.

Wee should allot time for prayer, as well as for other businesse.

Cautions about shortnes
of prayer in
such straits.

Cautions.
Husband time
well two
wayes.

husband
time well
two wayes
in such
straits

a time, but God in mercy, and in wisdom, hath left it to your liberty: onely you see this is the command, *Pray continually*, doe it exceeding much; at the least, keepe a constant course in it, as wee heard before, but you may be shorter in it.

Now let these five Cautions be observed:

First, take heed that this straining come not from your ill husbandry, that is, from your ill husbanding of time; for, if a man were careful to redeeme time before, it may be, he need not bee put to such a strait as hee is at that time, when he is to performe this duty. Suppose you have a journey to goe, that requires so much time, and you must be gone early; you may so husband the time before, that you may get time for your journey. And for the performance of this duty, and so for other businesse, as I said in the morning, when you should sequester your selves to performe this duty of prayer, take heed that you be good stewards of your time, that you husband it well.

2 And likewise, this is another part of husbanding your time, that you let not that, which is very precious, goe for things of small moment, for that is ill husbandry. You should redeeme the time, and buy it with the losse of something. You have time to bestow in the weighty businesse of your calling, in things that belong to the good man, much more should you in this that belongs to the worship of God. And therefore, if it may be, redeeme it with some losse, for
you

you ought to husband it, other wife you redeeming not time as you ought. This is the first Caution that ought to be observed, to husband and redeeme the time well.

The second is, if we be straitned at any time, recompence it at another time: for if it be not a feigned excuse and pretence, if you be straitned, when you have liberty, you will be carefull to spend more time in it, by that you shall know your sincerity in it, that it is true, and that it is not an excuse, and a putting off.

Moreover, another Caution to be observed is, that you take not too much businesse upon you: if you be straitned with businesse, and therefore cannot be so large in the performance of this dutie, as otherwise you would; if you did not take so much upon you, your selves are the cause of it. And therefore, he that takes lesse, he that spends more time in the things that belong to salvation, he hath made the better choice; as *Mary* made a better choice than *Martha*, though her employment were good.

Likewise, as you must not pester your selves with too much businesse, so likewise you must take care, that your mindes be not too much intent upon them; for too much intention of minde upon businesse, causeth distraction in prayer, and causeth us to poste over the duty, as well as too much businesse: when a mans minde shoots it selfe too farre in businesse, when it is too much occupied about it; when it is too much intent, when the soule cleaves too fast upon the busines, and

Caution 2.
Recompence it at another time.

Caution 3.
Take heed of too much businesse.

Caution 4.
Be not too intent upon businesse.

Caution 5.
Look to the
ground of the
strait.

and cannot loose it selfe to the performance of spirituall duties which require freedom.

The last Caution is, that the strait rise not from diffidence in God, and confidence in the use of the meanes; for it falls out oft times when wee have businesse of moment in hand, there is a turning, and passing from one creature to another, from the use of one meanes to another; that wee cannot get time in prayer, not so much for want of time simply, but because wee minde the meanes too much, wee intend them too much, wee doe not trust God enough with the businesse, if we did, we might spend lesse time in them, and more in seeking to him. So much for this Case.

Case 7.
About use of
the meanes.

Another Case of conscience in this businesse of calling upon God is, What a man is to doe for the use of the meanes; for when wee are bid to pray, and seeke to God; that is the ordinary question; But may wee not use the meanes too?

Answer.
Reasons why
meanes must
be used.

Reason 1
Else our desires
are not good.

To this I answer, That prayer is so farre from excluding the meanes, that it includes them; for if the desire be fervent, when wee desire any thing at Gods hands, it will make us diligent in the use of the meanes, to use a convenient diligence, as it will make you earnest in seeking to God, and in putting up your request to him. For, if a man shall pray, and bee negligent in the use of the meanes, I will be bold to say it, it is but like the desire of the slugard; that is a languishing, fainting desire: He desires, but his

his soule hath nothing; hee desires, but he puts his hand into his bosome: the desires which you expresse, when you pray, they are not fervent, they are not earnest, if you bee remisse in the use of the meanes. Hee that desires grace, desires strength against sinfull lusts and temptation, and yet is remisse in the use of the meanes, by which grace should be increased, and strength gained, to resist those corruptions, and temptations; certainly his desires are but vaine desires.

Besides, it is an argument that wee trust not in God, that wee make not accompt of our prayers, except wee bee diligent in the use of the meanes; therefore wee are farre from excluding them, for, if you seeke to God, and trust to your prayers, and thinke that they will prevaile with him, it will worke this effect, that you will be carefull to use such meanes, as God hath ordained to bring the thing to passe. Even as, if a man seeke to a Phisitian, to such a Phisitian, that hee trusts to, into whose hands hee would put his life; when this Phisitian prescribes such'a course, such a dyet, and such a thing to be taken at such a time, the more hee rests upon the Phisitian, the more carefull hee will bee to observe his prescription, and rules: And so, in this case, the more you rest on God, the more carefull you will be to use such meanes as hee hath appointed, when hee hath said, these, and these meanes are to be used. In this case, I say, it is a signe your prayers are more
to

Reason 2.

Else it is a
signe we trust
not God.

Simile.

to purpose, when you are diligent in the use of them; when you dare not slight nor neglect them.

Reason 3.
It is that we
pray for,

Againe, you must consider this, that when we pray, at any time, wee doe not pray to have a blessing upon the meanes, but we pray to ny thing done without meanes; and, if we pray for a blessing upon the meanes, our minde is not that they should be omitted: for, you see, *God* doth all things by second causes, hee save us not without our selves, that is, he useth us as instruments, he doth every thing by men, and by creatures, and by meanes, and the end of our prayers is, not to have them done without meanes, but to have a blessing upon them. But that which is chiefly to be observed to cleere this point to you is this; That prayer is not the onely meanes, it is but part of the meanes to bring any thing to passe.

Reason 4.
Prayer not the
onely meanes.

There are two things to effect a businesse, that is prayer and meanes both: we doe not say prayer is the onely meanes, indeed, then the other were excluded; but since it is but a part, and the other makes up the totall meanes of bringing any thing to passe, it doth not exclude them, but they may be both joyned together, prayer and the use of the meanes. This is enough to shew that we may use meanes, we may pray, and lay our hand on the plough, wee may seeke to *God*, and be diligent, and as diligent as any body else. But now these three Cautions are to be observed.

Cautions about
the use of the
meanes.

The

The first is, That, if wee doe use meanes, wee use those that are right; for if you trust *God*, and depend upon him, you will not steppe out to any inordinate meanes, nor use lawfull meanes in an inordinate manner: If you doe so, it is an argument that your prayers are of no value in your owne esteeme, you doe not rest on *God*, for if you did, you would not use other meanes, than hee hath appointed.

Caution 2.
We must use
right meanes.

Secondly. Though you use the meanes, and pray both, yet you must so use the meanes, that your confidence be not in your prayers: for it is one thing to use the meanes, & it is another thing to have confidence in them. And therefore wee say to you in this case, that you must doe as hee that useth the light of the Sunne; hee so useth the light, that he hath an eye upon the Sunne, from whome that light comes; for he knowes, that if the Sunne were set, the light would be gone. Or as he that takes water in a Cestearne, or River, he so takes it, as that hee hath an eye to the fountaine, hee knowes if the fountaine were stopped, the River would be quickly dried up: So you should thinke with your selves, if I use any meanes, any creature, any instrument to bring things to passe, mine eye must be upon *God*: for all the helpe that wee have from the creature, it is but as a beame to the helpe that comes from *God* himselfe. And therefore you must doe in this case, as Physitians are wont to doe, they put many ingredients into a thing, but it is one principall

Caution 3.
Not trust the
meanes.

Simile.

Simile.

all ingredient, amongst the rest, that he makes account will cure the disease: So doe in this case, make use, both of the prayer, and of the meanes, yet you must know, that prayer is the principall effecter of they thing, and the principall meanes, it is that, wherein your confidence is to be: for, indeed, it is *God* that doth bring every thing to passe: There is no good in the City, nor no evil, but he doeth it; you know he takes all to himselfe. All the meanes, by which good, and ill is conveyed to you, they doe not doe the thing, they are but the *vehicula*, they are but the instruments; as the beere and the wine, wherein the Physicke is taken but it is the Physicke, the medicine that cures: So all the meanes cannot doe it, it is the helpe, and the power of *God*, the efficacie, that comes from him, that brings things to passe, therefore that must be remembred, use the meanes, that you use, with dependance upon *God*, with an eye upon him, that your hearts rest not upon them; for, if they doe, it is an inordinate use of them.

Simile.

Caution 3.
Not to sticke
to particular
meanes.

Lastly, you must take heed of sticking in any particular meanes; for if you doe, it is a signe that you trust not *God* as you ought to doe. It is a fault commonly, we pitch upon such a particular way, and we thinke that must doe it, or nothing. Now if *God* be trusted too, he hath more waies to the wood than one, he hath more meanes to bring a thing to passe than one: And therefore we must leave it to him, who often doth it best by

by another meanes than we dreamed of. As for example, *David* had a promise of the Kingdome; Now, when he had the Kingdome of *Judah*, yet you know, the Kingdome of *Israel* stood out: for *Ishbosheth* had the Kingdome, and *Abner* was his chiefe Captaine: besides, in his comming into his Kingdome of *Judah*, wee see how *God* wrought the busines, without his device, by a meanes, that hee never thought of, in that battell, when *Saul* was killed, and so many of his sonnes, there was so much way made for him, when himselfe used no meanes to bring it to passe. Afterward when the Kingdome of *Israel* was kept from him, and he had onely *Judah*, we see; *God* caused a division between *Ishbosheth*, and *Abner* his chiefe Captain, upon that comes *Abner*, and offers to *David* the whole Kingdome, but yet he was but a reconciled enemy; and what *Abner* might have done, he knew not. Therefore, *God* by his providence, (though *Isab* sinned in it,) caused *Abner* to be taken away by *Isab*: when this was done, yet *Ishbosheth* was a live still; then were there two men set by the providence of *God*, (though it were a great sinne in them) to take away his head; and so the kingdome came wholly to *David*: for, there were but two sonnes, *Mephibosheth*, that was lame of his feet, and *Ishbosheth*, that was lame in his minde, a weake man, unable to manage so great and weighty a businesse to purpose: So *God* brought the businesse to passe by a way that *David* thought not of. Therefore, though wee may use meanes, yet, after the use of them, wee

shall

H

must

Wee are more
apt to trust
men than God.

Why God
works not by
our means.

Case 8.

About praying
in faith, when
a man wants a
particular pro-
mise, that the
thing which he
asketh shalbe
granted.

must depend upon God, and leave it to God, to take one meanes, or other. We must doe in this case, as we doe when we goe to a man, that is very skilfull to doe a worke for us: If we goe to a Carpenter, and tell him we have such a thing to be done; or, if we goe to those that we call *Aquarials*, that bring water from place to place, we tell him, this is our desire; but how he will worke, and which way he will bring it to passe, we know not, and yet we trust such an one: for we say, He is an honest man of his word, and if hee have undertaken it, it is enough. Why will you not trust God, that goes so much beyond us, that hath an infinite wisdom, and an infinite power? And therefore we should so use the meanes, that withall wee keepe our dependance upon him, that we leave it to him, to use this, or that meanes as it pleaseth him. For sometimes, it may be, he takes away that which we are about, sometimes he leaves us partly destitute, and findes a way of his owne, that we might trust to him, and consider his power, and his wisdom, that he is able to doe. So much likewise shall serve for this Case.

Another Case is, What it is to pray in faith? You know that is required. Now there is a common error in this point: for a man may say, If I pray for the salvation of another, I have no promise, how can I pray in faith? When a man prayes to be guided in such a businesse, to have such an enterprise to bee brought to passe, to have deliverance from such a trouble, such a sickness,

nosse, from such a calamity, that he lyeth under, hee findes no particular promise, and for ought hee knowes, it shall never be granted: How can hee bee said to pray in faith? For, to pray in faith, is to beleewe, that the thing shall bee done.

I answer, that to pray in faith, is to goe as farre as the promise goes. Now no particular man hath any particular promise, that hee shall have such a deliverance, that he shall have such a particular mercy granted him; and therefore it is not required to beleewe that that particular thing should be done.

But you will say, What faith is it then that is required?

I say, it is enough to beleewe that God is a Father, that hee is ready to heare, and not onely that hee is ready to heare, but that he is ready to doe that which is best for mee, in such a particular: for he is not required, that you beleewe him to bee well affected towards you, as a Father, as one that tenders you good, and not onely so, but that hee will doe that, in that particular, that shall be most for his owne glory, and for your good: and, if you doe so, you pray in faith, though, for the particular, you know not, whether it shall be granted, or no. Indeed, if we had a particular promise as *Abraham* had that it should not raine, &c. in that case, we were bound to beleewe in particular, but not having that, wee are not tyed unto it: for the promise is the object of faith, and the habit is

Ans.

Object.

What faith is required in prayer.

Ans.

Wee are not bound to beleewe, that the particular thing shall be granted which we pray for.

not to worke beyond the object; for the object is the rule, and the limit of the habit: therefore you may pray in faith, when yet you have no ground to beleive, and to thinke, that that particular thing should be granted. For example, if a father pray, that his sonne may have grace wrought in his heart, that his soule may be saved, it may be the Lord will never doe it; or, if one freind pray for another to the same purpose, though the thing be not done, yet the prayer returns into his bosome, hee is no losser by it, there is a reward belongs to him, for seeking to God in sincerity, it is his duty, that hee should doe so. The like I may say for every particular case. And this encouragement you may have, that there is never any particular prayer put up, wherein you seeke things that are not granted, but you mistake in it: for, if you beleive thus farre, as I said to you, be sure that your prayers are accepted, God will doe that which is best for you, and your prayers shall not be lost. So much also for that.

If our prayers
be not granted
we mistake in
them.

Case 9.

About a mans
knowledge
that his prayer
is heard.

Ans.

The last case is, How shall a man know whether his prayer be heard, or not? For answer to this we will give you this one rule, (and that is as farre as wee can goe) that those prayers that are made by the assistance of Gods holy Spirit, it is certaine, they are alwayes heard: if you finde that at any time, you need make no question, but that God heares it, and will doe the thing, observing the Cautions that we have given you heretofore, that is, for the means,

meanes, the, manner, the time, and the measure: for it cannot be, but that when the heart is enlarged by Gods owne Spirit, that the prayer is an expression of holy desires, the Lord alwayes heares. That place is cleare for it, *Rom. 8. 27.* that *He knowes the meaning of the spirit*: that is, he so knowes it, that hee hearkeneth to it, that he alwayes accepts of it: and therefore, when you come in such a case, at any time, that your hearts are enlarged in a speciall manner: Marke, I say, when your hearts are enlarged in a speciall manner, and that, with holy desires, certainly, then God meanes to grant our requests: he would not send his spirit to be an intercessor in your hearts, if hee did not meane to doe it: for, in that case, hee withholds his spirit, hee gives us not that enlargement of heart. Onely this distinction must be carefully remembred; you may be sometime very earnest, (the parent may be very earnest for his child, as *David* was for his; And *Moses*, for ought we see, was earnest to have gone into the land of *Canaan*, they were things that they desired) and yet that may be an expression of naturall desires.

In that case, a man may be very earnest, and yet he cannot build upon it, to say, my heart is much enlarged in prayer, and therefore I shall be heard; but take in this, when the heart is enlarged with holy desires, and that in a speciall manner, somewhat more than ordinary, as that, you see, it is the worke of the spirit of God, quickning your heart, opening it wide, strengthening, and

H 3

inlarging

Rom. 8. 27.

When God
will grant our
prayers, and
when not.

Note.

What kinde of
enlargement of
heart argues
that our pray-
ers are heard.

inlarging it, and sharpening grace and holiness in you, in those requests. you put up to God; in this case, build upon it, your prayers are heard from that ground wee have given you, *He knowes the meaning of the spirit.* So much shall serve for those Cases of Conscience in this spirituall duty of calling upon God.

Qualifications
or conditions
required in
that prayer
that shall be
accepted.

I. *Cautiō.*

That the person be right,
Iam. 5. 16.

I.
Because a man
must have
Christ, before
he have any
thing else.

2
The generall
Covenant is
before the particular.

Now the last thing wee propounded wus this: What the qualification is that is required in our prayers: for now we have said so much of prayer, it is a necessary thing that wee know what conditions are required, that it may be acceptable.

And the first (wee wil commend to you, that which is the ground, and first in order before all the rest) is, that the person be right. *The prayer of the righteous doth prevaile much, Iames. 5. 16.*

The ground of it is this; a man must first have Christ before he can have any thing else, *He hath giuen us all things else with Christ.* : If we have all things else, if we have not him, it is nothing: *All the promises,* you know, *are yea, and Amen,* but it is in *him*; so that we must first have him. And besides, the generall Covenant must goe before the particular: for the ground of all prayer is this or that particular promise, but you must first be within the Covenant, you must first have the generall Covenant belonging to you; before you can have the particular branches of it; & therefore a man must be within the covenant, his person must be first righteous, and be accepted: & therefore yet none deceive themselves in this case, to thinke

thinke thus with himselfe, he hopes his heart is sincere, and his prayers a right, and his ends are good: for though all this were true, yet if his person be not right, God regards it not. You know the blood of a sheepe, and the blood of a swine, they are both alike, it may be, the blood of the swine is better than the other: yet the blood of the swine was not to be offered, because it was the blood of a swine. So in this case, the prayer of an unregenerate man may be as well framed, for the petitions, for every thing that is required immediately to a prayer: but the heart, from whence it comes, the person, from whence it proceeds, that is it that makes the difference: and therefore that must be observed, see the person be right. And therefore you shall finde *Psal. 4. 3.* David makes that the ground, why his prayers should be heard: saith he, *Be yee sure that God hath chosen for himselfe the godly man. And when I call upon him I shall be heard:* For that is the ground that hee takes to himselfe, that hee shall be heard, that God hath chosen to himselfe the godly man. As if he should say, I am of the number, and therefore you that are my enemyes, and thinke to prevaile against me, I feare you not, for I pray to a God that will defend me, I am a godly man, and upon that ground I beleeve that my prayer is hard. *Beloved*, otherwise, though we pray, and pray heard, yet our sinnes cry lower than our prayers, they cry downe our prayers, they make a greater noise than they, that the noise that our sinnes make is like the noise of a Thunder,

H 4

when

Simile.

An unregenerate man may frame a prayer as well as a holy man.

Psal 4. 3.

Our sins out-cry our prayers till our persons be right.

Simile.

2

Remove particular finnes.

Why the Saints
beginne their
Prayers with
humiliation.

1 Tim. 2. 8.

when the noise of our prayers is but like the crackling of thornes, that it cannot be heard for the noise that sin makes in the eares of the Lord. Thus it is, in this case, when we come before God in our finnes; when a man comes into his presence in his unregeneracy.

But this is not all, but likewise, a man that is within the Covenant, may have a perticular sin, (as you heard heretofore) that may intercept his prayers, and that may hinder the blessing: so that, that sinne must be removed, before his prayers can be heard. It is true, *The sonne abides in the house for ever*, but yet the sonne may commit such an offence, that his father may use him as a servant, hee may deny his requests, and refuse them, when hee comes to seeke any thing at his hands. And therefore, there must be a particular reconciliation, a particular repentance, that sinne must be removed, and done away, that stands in the way. And therefore, this method the Saints have kept in calling upon God: See in *Daniel*, and *Ezra*, all of them, for the most part, when they make any compleat prayer, we see, still they begin with humiliation, and confession of finnes. And the reason of it is, that their persons might bee cleare and innocent, that those finnes might be removed, which would stand in their way; and likewise, that is a ground of that 1 Tim. 2. 8. saith the Apostle there, *I will, that prayers be made in all places, that you lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting*: The meaning is this, not onely that a man bee within the Covenant, but that

that he be cleansed from all particular finnes, that might cleave to him, and hang upon him. As, for example, when thou wouldest be accepted of God, if there be any particular sinne hang on thee, that must be removed by renewing thy repentance: and besides that, see what the Scripture takes notice of, when a man comes to pray, his heart must be cleansed from pride, (for *God resists the proud*) his heart must be brought to an humble disposition, likewise it must be cleansed from wrath, he must *lift up pure hands without wrath*, that is oft required: *Matth. 5. Leave thine offering, and goe and make peace with thy brother.* So likewise from unthankfulnesse; our prayers are not accepted, except we be thankfull for mercies received. The like wee may say of every particular case: we must bee carefull to cleanse our selves from all sinfull lusts, and corrupt affections, that they have not domination in our hearts, but that we lift up pure hearts, and innocent hands: and that is the first thing that is required, that the person be right; that is, not onely that hee be within the Covenant, but likewise that those particular finnes be removed, that may be an impediment to his prayers.

The second thing required is, faith; *Lift up pure hands without wrath and doubting.* You know that in *James, Let him aske of God, let him aske in faith, and waver not.* So that though prayer be the key to open Gods treasures, yet faith is the hand that turnes the key, without which it will doe no good.

When we pray we must cleanse our hearts.

1.
From pride.

2.
From wrath.
Mat. 5. 23, 24.

3.
From unthankfulnesse.

2. Requisite or condition is faith.
James 1, 5, 6.

Simile.

Now

Why the Lord
requires faith
in prayer.

James I. 6.

A twofold faith
required in our
prayers.

Now the Lord requires faith, partly, for his owne sake; he should not otherwise be acknowledged, if you did not trust him, when you come to seeke him, if you did not rest upon him. Besides hee should loose his glory; for in this wee glorifie him, when we trust him, and wee dishonour him, when we distrust him; when we come, and seeke to him, and doe not rest upon him, wee dishonour him.

Besides, in regard of us he requires faith, and will not heare us without it; because, as it is James I. 6. in the same place, where faith is required, there is good reason why it is required; for faith the Apostle there, *He that beleeves not, or he that wavers, hee is like a wave of the sea*: that is, sometimes in his prayer he is very earnest, as a wave that swells high; sometimes againe he will be nothing at all: yea, faith the Apostle, he is not onely uneven in the businesse of prayer, sometimes earnest and forward, and sometimes giving over againe, of and on, but such a man is unstable in all his wayes; for he that trusts in God, will be carefull, not onely in prayer, but to keep all his wayes right; but he that trusts him nor, wavers in every thing: he is (it may be) diligent in prayer, he will looke to his wayes for a time, but he rests not upon God, he rests upon other things, *He is like a wave*, he is not constant: and therefore faith is required. Now when I say faith is required, know this, that there is a double faith required:

The one is a faith in the providence of God, the other is a faith in his promise.

First

First, I say, faith in the providence, which is a thing of much moment, and we are apt to forget it. We see it cleereley, *Psalm 146. Blessed is he that trusts in the God of Jacob, &c. who made heaven, and earth, and the sea, who keepes covenant, and mercy for ever*: you see faith there required in the providence, *He made heaven and earth, the sea*, he is such a God, who is able to bring great things to passe; for he made heaven and earth: and is he not able to doe any thing besides?

Secondly, there must be a faith in his promise, as is expressed in the other words, *He keepeth Covenant for ever*. So likewise to expresse the defect of it: You see when *Martha* and *Mary* came to *Christ* to raise *Lazarus*, they beleeeved he was ready enough to doe it, (there was faith in his willingnesse) but they wanted faith in his providence; for *Martha* comes to him, and tells him, *Lord, faith thee, Hee hath beene in the grave foure dayes*: as if shee had said, surely now it cannot be done, if thou hadst come sooner, it might have beene brought to passe: so she beleeeved him to be willing, but there wanted faith in the providence.

Again, as here faith in the providence was wanting; so we see, in the *Lepers*, there was faith in the providence, (it may be, the other was wanting, but that is not expressed, it is more probable hee had both) *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole*. Here was an evidence of faith in the providence, he acknowledgeth his power, *if thou wilt, thou canst make me whole*: but because *Christ* did answer him, it is likely he had faith

I
Faith in Gods
providence.
Psalm 146. 5. 6.

2
Faith in the
promises.

For
about in this I
conclude
that

Mathe. 7. 7.

Wee doubt of
Gods willing-
nes more than
of his power to
grant our re-
quests.

How faith may
be strengthened
in prayer.
From Gods
Attributes,
Which are of
two sorts.
a Absolute.

faith in the promise too; so, I say, there must be
a faith, first, in the providence; secondly, there
must be a faith also in the promise of God: you
have ground enough for that, you have his sure
word for it, he hath said, *Aske and you shall have,
seek and ye shall finde: knock and it shall bee opened
to you; and whatsoever you aske, if it be according
to his will, it shall be done to you.* So that is the thing
wee are chiefly to looke unto, to consider this
faith in Gods promise; for men are ready to say,
I doubt not but God is able; but all the question
is, whether he be willing or no. And therefore,
if wee will have our prayers strong, and prevail-
lent, we must be carefull to strengthen our faith
in his promise: for, as that is strong, so our pray-
ers doe more prevaile with God. It is a matter of
much moment, and therefore we will shew brief-
ly how your faith may be strengthened, and like-
wise how you may know it.

First, you shall strengthen your faith, if you
consider the nature of God. *Beloved*, this is a
great cause why wee beleve not the promise of
God, and his readinesse to helpe us in difficult ca-
ses, because wee are Ignorant of the nature of
God, of the Attributes of God, or at least, we do
not consider them. for example, (that I may
open it to you a little, and shew you the way of
making use of the Attributes of God, in calling
upon him, & strengthening our faith from them)
consider, first, the Justice of God, (I will give you
examples, how the Saints have still strengthened
their faith from Gods Attributes) David useth this

Argument

Argument, *Lord, thou art just, I am Innocent*: when hee telleth God of his Justice, and withall expresseth his owne Innocencie; it is a strong Argument. *David*, you see, useth it oft, (I need not to name particulars) *Lord reward me according to mine Innocencie*, &c. *thou knowest I am righteous*, and mine enemies have done mee thus and thus much wrong, &c. thou art just: God cannot deny this, for it is a strong Argument, that is taken from such an Attribute.

1 Justice

So againe, the goodnesse of God; *Lord thou art full of mercie*, on the other side, *I am full of miserie*: and when these are put together, it is a great meanes to strengthen our faith. And therefore, we see, *David* often expresseth his owne calamity, his disease; how hee was oppressed by enemies, and slandered, &c. and Gods mercie, (that is the ground of it,) *God is full of compassion*: as if he should say, thou art full of goodnesse, and I am in calamity, and miserie, at this time: and that was an Argument whereby he strengthened his faith.

2 Mercy.

So againe, another Attribute of Gods, his glory: when we make the Argument thus, *Lord, thou hast an eye to thy glory*; and I aime at thy glory: In such a request, it is a strong prevailing Argument with him. You know, *Moses* prevailed with him, when he sought the saving of the whole people of *Israel*; *Lord*, saith he, *thy name will be polluted; what will the heathen say?* And since I aime at thy glory in it, deny me not. And likewise *Ezekiel*; and *David*, they use the same Argument.

3. Glory.

gument to God, shall the dust praise thee? shall any glory be given to thee in the grave? shall we be able to doe any thing for thy honour, when wee are dead? So that the Arguments that are taken from Gods glory, and our ayme at his glory, is another meanes to strengthen our faith.

4 Power,

Moreover, the power of God; that is another Attribute; whereby we may conceive the same Argument, as before, when wee goe to God, and expresse our weaknesse, and his power, Lord, we are weake, we are able to doe nothing: Lord, thou art Almighty, thou mad'st heaven and earth, it is a strong argument to prevaile with him. So, we see, *Asa* prevailed with God, 2 Chr. 14. *Oh Lord, saith hee, it is all one with thee to helpe with many, or few, and we rest upon thee: as if he should say, We are exceeding few, we are exceeding weake, we are able to doe nothing, but thou art able to doe it, with a few, as well as with a great multitude; there he puts them together. and the like we have of Iehosaphat, Lord, we have no strength to stand before our enemies, but our eyes are to thee: As if he should say, thou hast strength and power enough, thou art able to doe it, though we are unable: This is another Argument taken from the power of God.*

2 Chr. 14. 11.

2 Chr. 20. 12.

5. Vnchange-
ablenesse.

Again, the unchangeablenesse of God. When one comes to the Lord, and shall say to him, Lord, thou hast done thus and thus in former times for thy servants, Lord, thou hast done thus and thus for me, in another case; and thou art unchangeable, thou art the same God: this is a great

meaning

meanes

meanes to strengthen our faith. As you know, it is in your Law-suites, when you have a president, it addes strength to the cause, and when we have presidents for this, it will adde strength to us, and that strength is taken from Gods unchangeableness: if wee put them together, Lord, thou art unchangeable, Lord, thou hast done it to other men in the like case; thou hast done it to me also in the like case; it is a strong Argument, and an Argument that David useth: You see how he is stayed by it, *Psal. 22. 4. Lord, our fathers trusted in thee, and were delivered, they trusted in thee, & were not confounded.* As if he should say, Lord, thou art unchangeable, thou hardest them in the same case when they trusted in thee, now, it is my case, and therefore I beseech thee to helpe mee in my distresse.

Simile.

Psal 22. 4.

Againe, the faithfulness of God, the fidelity of God, that is another of his Attributes: and when wee make our Argument thus, Lord, thou art faithfull, and I trust in thee, it is a strong Argument, you know, it is an Argument that prevails much with men. A man is ready to say, he trusts mee, I must not deceive him: Now the Lord keeps Covenant, and mercy for ever. When wee come, and use this to him, Lord, thou art faithfull, thou hast said, thou wilt keepe Covenant and mercy for ever, thou canst not do otherwise, it is thy nature, thou canst not deny thy selfe, and I rest on thee, I depend on thee, in such a case, it cannot be, the Lord should faile us: If a man will not faile one that trusts in him, certainly

6 Faithfulness.

certainly the *Lord* will not, and that is an Argument that is used oft, thou never failest them that trust thee.

2. Relative.

Then, besides the absolute Attributes of *God*, consider his relative Attributes; he is a *Father*, and a *Master*: it is a strong Argument that is taken from these. If we goe to the *Lord*, and say, *Lord*, thou art a *Father*, thou art a *Master*, thou art an husband; Whether should the children goe, but to their father? Whether should the wife goe, but to her Husband? Whither should the servants goe, but to their Master, to their Lord? *Lord*, thou hast commanded us to provide for our owne, and *He is worse than an Infidel that provides not for his owne*. *Lord*, we belong to thee, we are thine. We see, *David* useth this Argument, that *God* had made him. You have it oft in the *Psalmes*, that *God* had made him, not onely his Creature, but had made him againe, hee was his servant; *I am thy servant*: hee useth oft this Relative, that *God* was his *G O D*, and that he was *Gods* servant; one that did belong to him, and that did depend upon him. And surely (my Beloved) dependance, and seeking to *G O D*, is a great meanes to winne him to us. When we see an other depend upon us, one that is ours, that is an effectuall motive with men: the same is as prevalent with *God*; and therefore may strengthen our faith. Now, when I say these Arguments prevaile with *G O D*, the meaning is indeed, that they prevaile with us, they strengthen our faith, they enable us to beleeve, that *G O D* is ready to helpe

Arguments in
prayer strengthen
our faith

helpes, and when wee beleeve it, and trust upon him, then indeed God is ready to second it; because then we are prepared, wee can then put up our desires in the prayer of faith: otherwise they are put up with doubting, and that makes them unacceptable to God, and uneffe-
 ctuall. And now, as I have shewed you the way, so likewise in a word, we will shew you when we doe pray in faith, (for that is a thing that is very usefull) you shall know it by this: (for I adde that, because I see the Scripture requires it, as such a maine condition, without which a man cannot be accepted, *See is done to thee according to thy faith*, it is every where inculcated) you shall know it by the quietnesse of your minde, and your security. When a man calls upon God, and his minde is quiet in it, it is a signe that he beleeves, and trusts in him, it is a prayer of faith. *Hannah*, you know, in that case, *shee looked no more sad*, because shee trusted in God, shee beleeved the thing should be done: and therefore if you finde solicitude and perplexity in your minde, it is a signe that your prayers want so much faith; for if you did rest upon God, you would be quiet, and secure in him.

How wee may know that wee pray in faith.

I

By the quietnesse of the minde after

2

By continuance in prayer

Secondly, if you doe beleeve, you will continue in prayer. You know, it was an argument of the faith of the woman of *Canaan*, that she continued, that shee would take no deniall; though the Lord denied her, and put her off, yer shee held out: and what was the reason of it? because she beleeved that he was the sonne of *David*, that he

I

was

Simile.

Esay 28,

3
Diligence in
the use of the
meanes.

was mercifull, and that he would heare in the end. So that continuance in prayer, it is an argument we doe beleeeve the *Lord*, As a man that beleeves, that such a man is within the house whome he desires to speake with, hee is content to wait long: Or one, that hath a suit, and hee knowes that hee shall have an end of it, at this time, he will never give over: So it is in this case, if we beleeeve, wee will be content to wait, *He that beleeves will not make haist*, because he trusts in God, and depends upon him.

Likewise, an argument of faith is a diligent use of those meanes that God hath prescribed, and no other. and so we have shewed you two things that are required in prayer: that the person must be righteous, and within the Covenant: Secondly, faith is required, and likewise how this faith is wrought, both in his providence; and in his promises, and likewise how wee shall know, whether our prayers be the prayers of faith, or no.

FINIS.

THE
FIFTH
SERMON.

1 THES. 5. 17.

Pray continually.

THE next condition required in prayer is *servency*; you know the place, *The prayer of the righteousse prevayles much, if it be fervent.* The Lord requires this qualification in prayer, because it puts the heart into a holy and spirituall disposition: for it is not simply the making of the request, that God looks for at our hands, but such a working upon our hearts by prayer, such a bringing of them to a good frame of grace, by that duty, that thereby wee are more fitted to receive the mercy,

3. Condition.
required in
prayer is *servency.*
James 5. 16.

What God requires in prayer

Why God re-
quires ferven-
cy.

Simile.

that before we were not. When a man is fervent in prayer, it sets all the wheelles of the soule the right way, it puts the heart into a holy and spirituall disposition and temper; so that the Lord sees it now fit to bestow mercy upon such a man, that before was unfit, by reason of his untowardnesse, and stubbornesse of heart, by reason of that uncleane and unholy disposition, that he saw in him. And therefore hee will have prayer fervent; not so much because the very fervency of prayer it selfe is respected, but because by vertue of that fervency the heart is made better: when a man comes to God with a request, like the request of the patient to the Physitian, it may be the Physitian denies long, when the patient asks things that are pleasant and agreeable to him; not because he is unwilling to give them, but because his body must be brought into another temper, he must take a vomit, or a purge, that perhaps is greivous to him, but this must be done before he be fit to receive such cordials: so the Lord doth with his servants, though hee be willing to bestow such mercies on them, yet, because they are not fitted, he requires continuance in prayer, and fervencie in it. Therefore, we say, in prayer all the graces of Gods Spirit are set on worke, and the more fervent the prayer is, the more they are intended, the more they are acted, the more they are increased; and therefore the Lord is moved by this fervency, to bestow a mercy on us, that otherwise hee would not doe.

But

But now all the question is, what this fervencie is?

You shall find it usually expressed in the Scriptures by such metaphors as these, *Crying to the Lord, wrestling with the Lord, striving with him, and giving him no rest*; wherein these two things are to be marked:

First, a man is said then to be fervent, when he puts all his strength to prayer, when he is very earnest, and importunate with the *Lord*, when hee strives and contends with him, though he finde many difficulties, and impediments, yet he breakes through all; this is to be fervent in prayer, to be importunate with the *Lord*. For example, when a man comes to pray, and findes many discouragements, and findes himselfe guilty of many sinnes, and findes little holinesse, he hath but feeble faith to his owne sense, he findes much deadnesse of spirit, yet he continues instant notwithstanding; and when likewise hee doth not onely finde these impediments in himselfe, but hee findes the *Lord* exceeding backward to the thing, either giving no answer, turning the deafe eare to him, or it may be, giving a contrary answer, as to the woman of *Canaan*.

As for example, when a man comes to pray for health, it may be his sicknes increaseth upon him more; when he prayes to overcome such a lust or temptation, it may be, it is doubled upon him; when hee prayes for such a deliverance, it may be, the oppression growes more and more; as it was with the *Israelites*, when they sought for deliverance,

Quest.

Ans.

When a man is said to bee fervent.

Is

When wee put to all our strength notwithstanding difficulties,

Mat. 27.

verance, the oppression grew greater: now to hold out notwithstanding this, and to continue in prayer, and to outwastle *God* in it, though he seeme backward to the request; this is to be fervent in prayer.

2
When we are
constant.

Secondly, fervency is not onely loud praying, but continuall knocking, when a man is not onely importunate with the *Lord*, but hee continues long, he will not give over, till he have got the blessing. You know, *Jacobs* fervencie was scene in that, that he continued all night, *He wrestled with the Lord*. What was the reason that he wrestled? *He would not let him goe, till he had got the blessing*, till he had obtained the thing he sought for. So I say, this earnestnesse, and continuance in prayer, the breaking through all difficulties, this is to wrestle with the *Lord*: for all wrastring, and striving, you know, supposeth some opposition on the other part. Indeed, if there were no opposition, it were a small thing; but, I say, when the *Lord* is most backward, when the thing is most improbable, when there is much difficultie, that you know not how it should be brought to passe, yet you continue striving, and give the *Lord* no rest, you will not give over; this is fervency in prayer, and this is a condition that the *Lord* requires. Onely these two Cautions must be remembered, that we mistake not this fervency:

Cautions a-
bout fervency.

1
That it be a
fruit of faith.

Simile.

First, remember, fervencie, if it be right, it must be a fruit of faith: for there is a fervency that comes not from faith, but from a naturall sense of want, when a man is indeed as a swine that

that is pinched, which, you know, will cry exceeding loud, not because it lookes for helpe, but because it is pinched: so any creature, or man naturally will use importunity, when he wants any thing, he will be earnest in his requests; such fervency the Lord regards not, because there is no more but a meere expression of naturall desires, there is no holinesse in it, there is no fire of the Spirit, but when this is added to it, that there is not onely a sense of the thing wee want, but also a hope of mercie, a ground to beleve that I shall have the thing granted, and out of this ground I am earnest and importunate, how earnestnesse is a fruit of faith. When Iesus Christ lived upon earth, when men came and cried earnestly unto him, and were exceeding importunate, some to be healed of there discaies, some to have devils cast out, &c. wee see his answer was still to them, Be it to thee, (how?) not according to their importunity, and fervency, but according to their faith: as if hee should say, I heed not, I regard not all this clamour and earnestnesse, if they be onely expressions of such wants, if they be onely in the sense of such need, and no more; but if they proceed from faith, and that faith set you on worke to call upon mee, *Be it unto thee according to that.* For indeed, these two things make up fervency, in prayer, sense of need, and hope of mercie, when a man hath faith and hope to increase his fervencie; and it ariseth from that ground, as well as out of the other, (not that I exclude the other, for it is a very great helpe, and

When fervency is a fruit of faith.

Whence fervency springs.

Simile.

that which pins stickes on the fire, as it were, to make our fervency the more) I say, from sense of our need, when we consider seriously what want wee have, and then adde this hope, and faith; when these two shall set you on worke, this fervency is a fruit of faith. This is one caution that must be remembred.

2 *Caution.*
That it bee
mingled with
sincerity.

Note.

Rom. 12. 11.

Another Caution is this, that your fervency be joynd with sincerity; for a man may be fervent to obaine such and such blessings, as he may begge at *Gods* hand very earnestly, hee may aske credit, he may aske to have guidance in such a businesse, he may aske wisdom to bring such an enterprise to passe, hee may aske health, and continuance of life, but to what end? if it be that he may bestow it upon his lusts, if it bee that hee may live more deliciously, that he may be some body more in the world, that hee may have outward conveniences, such as his flesh desires, if this be all, here this fervencie is not regarded; not that these things are excluded, for the *Lord* gives us leave to seeke our owne comforts, and you may be earnest, and importunate, even for the comfort it selfe; but yet all these, if they be not capable of a further use, if that be not intended, but the abuse of them, and an intent to use them another way, the *Lord* heeds it not, it is no true fervencie. And therefore in *Rom. 12. 11.* it is the exhortation of the Apostle, *Be fervens in spirit serving the Lord*; when wee many times, it may be, are fervent in spirit serving our selves, we are fervent to aske such and such requests, our
of

of ends of our owne, as when a man desires able gifts, high gifts, to get glory, and to get wealth to himselfe, and not to serue his master, this is to aske the talent, not for his masters vse, but for his owne use; doe you thinke the *Lord* will heare such prayers? can you expect it at his hands? You shall see the contrary disposition in the Saints; when they were earnest with the *Lord* for any thing, still they expresse that to him, and say, *Lord*, wee desire not this for our selves, but for thy glory, that wee may use it for some good purpose, &c. *David*, when he was earnest for life, when he was in sicknesse, and doubted of his recovery, what argument doth hee use? *Lord*, saith he, *shalt thou have glory in the grave?* As if hee should say, if thou give me life, I will give it thee againe, I will improve it, and husband it to thy advantage, and not to mine owne. And so *Hannah*, when she was earnest for a sonne, she makes this promise to the *Lord*, that he shall be for him, and his advantage; she would dedicate him to his use, and consecrate him to his service. So *Jacob*, when hee was earnest with the *Lord* to give him meat, drinke, and cloathes, &c. *Lord*, saith hee, *if thou doe, I will give the tenth part to thee againe.* I say, when the heart is thus disposed in our seruencie, in our importunitie, when wee aske any thing at the *Lords* hands, that our conscience tells us within, that if wee had it, wee would bestow it upon the *Lord*, wee would not abuse it, wee would not spend it on our lusts, it should not be to serve our selves, but to serve the *Lord* with-
all,

What argument the Saints have used in their prayers.

4 Condition
required in
prayer is hu-
mility.

Jam. 4.

2 Chron. 7. 14.

Isay 66. 2.

Reason why
humility is re-
quired in pray-
er.

God exalts
such.

Gen. 32.

all, then our fervency is rightly ordered. The next condition required, is *humility*, as *James 4. The Lord gives grace to the humble*: And *2 Chron. 7. 14. If my people humble themselves, and call upon my name, then will I heare in heaven, and grant their requests*. And throughout the Scrip-
ture, you see, that this is a condition that the Lord puts in every where; *Hee hath respect to the lowe estate, Isay. 66. 2. saith the Lord, All these things have my hands made*, looking upon all the creatures, the whole frame of them, they are all good, and I have respect unto them; but, saith he, I regard not all these in comparison of an humble heart, *To him will I looke that is of an humble and contrite spirit*: when the Lord looks upon our prayers, if they come not from a broken heart, they want that condition that he lookes for: for *Hee gives grace to the humble*, because such a man is little in his owne eyes, and fiero be exalted, fiero receive mercy at Gods hands.
You know, it is a rule that the Lord keeps; for such as are humble and low, such he exalts; those that exalt themselves he puts downe. Now when a man is little in his owne eyes, that par-
vity, that sense of his owne unworthinesse is a prevailing argument with him; and therefore *Gen. 32. Jacob useth that Argument*, when hee comes to to put up that petition, to be delivered from *Esau*: *Lord, I am lesse than all thy mercies*: that is, take any of thy mercies, and put them in one end of the balance, and put me in the other, and I am lesse than it; and lighter than it; take all the

the worth that is in me, it is not heavie enough for the least mercy. Now, when he was thus humbled, and little, and vile in his owne eyes, the Lord bestowed that mercy on him, hee was now fit to receive it. So *David*, when the Lord sends him word by *Nathan*, that he would build him a house for ever, (you see how he expressed himselfe) Hee went into the house of the Lord, and saide before him, and said, Lord, what am I, and what is my fathers house? As if he should say, I was taken out of the dust, I was one of the meekest men of *Israel*, and a man of no account, of no worth, and yet thou hast had respect unto me thus farre, not onely to make me King over thy people, but to build my Kingdome, and my house, to make me a constant house for ever. I say, this sense of our owne unworthinesse, it make us more fit to receive the mercie, to be exalted by receiving such a request, as wee put up to the Lord, and therefore hee regards the prayer of the humble.

2 Sam 7. 18.

God gives grace to such.

God gives grace to such.

Acts 13. 22.

Moreover, God gives grace to the humble, that is, he shewes favour to them, when they come and aske any thing at his hands, because an humble man will be ready to doe whatsoever he will, it is an expression of *David* in *Acts* 13. 22. Hee will doe whatsoever I will: that may bee said of every humble man, he is exceeding pliable to the Lords will, hee is ready to doe whatsoever he knowes to be his pleasure, hee resists him in nothing. Now, when a man will doe whatsoever God will, the Lord will be ready to doe whatsoever

Mat. 23. 28.

ver he will, he will be ready to say to him, as he did to the *Cananite*, *Oh woman, bee it to thee as thou wilt.* When a man, on the other side, resists the *Lord*, (as every proud man doth, saith the text) the *Lord* resists him, the *Lord* resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. A resisting spirit causeth the *Lord* to resist our prayers; and therefore it is, that the *Lord* is ready to the humble man, because he yeelds to the *Lord* in all things; and when a man yeelds to the *Lord*, (take that for a rule) in obeying *Gods* commandements, *God* will yeeld to us in granting our petitions.

Note.

3.

It is an acceptable sacrifice.

Psal. 51. 16. 17.

Besides, when the heart is humbled, and broken, and contrite, it is an acceptable sacrifice to the *Lord*, which winnes it at his hands: he smells a sweete savour from such a sacrifice above all other; yea, it is that which sets a high price upon every sacrifice that wee offer; the best prayers, the best workes, that proceed not from an humble heart, he regards them not: as *Psal.* 51. *Lord* saith he, *if I offer sacrifice, thou wilt not regard it, but the sacrifice of a contrite, and humble spirit, those thou regardest, and those sacrifices that proceed from it.* When we come to make a petition to the *Lord*, (it was the manner in the old law not to come empty-handed) a proud person comes empty-handed, but an humble person comes with a sacrifice, and the best sacrifice; because he sacrificeth himselfe, and his owne will, that is, he empties himselfe of himselfe, he opens a dore to the *Lord* to come, and dwell in him, when a proud man barres him out; such a sacrifice

since the Lord is well pleased with, and such a sacrifice speaks for one, it makes away for his requests, and therefore the Lord hearkens to it.

Lastly, the Lord is ready to heare those that are humble, because whatsoever they receive, they take it as of grace, and not as debt: whereas a proud man, a man that hath a good conceit of himselfe, a man that is lift up in his owne opinion, thinks it to be due, he thinks there is some correspondence betweene his works, and the wages. You know what is said of the Pharisee, that the publican went away justified rather then he. Why so? Because the Publican thought himselfe worthy of nothing. And therefore *Ezek. 34. 31.* when the Lord promisetht those great mercies to his people, he requirerh this condition of them, that they should acknowledge themselves worthy to be destroyed. When a man hath a sense of his owne unworthinesse, and so comes to the Lord, and aske it as of mere grace and mercy, that is a great motive to prevaile with him; for he is very carefull of that. You know in *Deut. 30. 11.* how wary the Lord was in giving this rule to them; Take heed when thou comest into that good Land, thinke not to say with thy selfe, the Lord hath done this for my owne righteousness. He saith he, I have not done it for that, but for my Covenant which I made with Abraham, Isaac & Jacob: that is for my owne name sake, for my mercies sake, for the covenants that I confirmed with them, that is the covenant in Iesus Christ, therefore I have done it, and not for your owne righteousness. So you see, that this

4
They receive
all as of free
grace.

Luke 18.

Ezek. 36. 31.

Deut. 8. 15.

3. 11. 12.

this is a condition the Lord will have observed in our calling upon him; that our hearts be humbled; that a man be little, and vile in his owne eyes; that he come with a broken, and contrite heart, pliable to him in all things, ready to obey him; when the heart is so disposed, hee gives grace, that is, he shewes favour, he is ready to grant our requests.

5. Condition
required in
prayer, to
sanctifie the
Lord in our
hearts

The next condition required in prayer, is, that wee sanctifie the Lord in our hearts. You know, when Nadab and Abihu drew neere unto him with a common fire, (when they should have brought such fire as came from heaven, holy fire) the Lord destroyed them: and he gives this reason, For I will be sanctified in those that draw neere to me. When we come to call upon the Lord, we know, then we come neere to him, and in such drawing neere, wee must sanctifie him in our hearts, that is, we must conceive him to be, as he is, most holy. Now if the Lord be most holy, if he that is uncleane, and impure, and unholy, shall come neere him, hee sanctifies not the Lord God; (that is) hee comes not to him as to a most holy God; but he lookes upon him, as if he were a common person. And therefore whensoever they came to offer a sacrifice, in the old law, they were first purified; if any man were uncleane, and should offer a sacrifice, he was to be cut off from his people. Therefore, to sanctifie the Lord in our hearts, is to come with holy hearts, as in the 1st Tim. 2. 8. It is the charge that the Apostle gives there, Lift up pure hands without which we doubting:

1 Tim. 2. 8.

doubting: lift up your hearts, and innocent hands, without wrath, or doubting.

You will say unto me, what is this holiness?

Beloved, it is nothing but a sequestering, or separating any thing from a common use, and appropriating it to GOD alone, that is holiness.

You know, whatsoever was holy to the Lord, in the temple, or other wise, whether it were holy vessels, or holy men, as the Priests, it was separated from all other uses, and made peculiar to him, and to his service. Now the heart of a man is holy then, when it is withdrawne from all things else, and peculiar to the Lord alone. As a chaste wife is to her husband, whose affections are bestowed upon him, and no other person else, so when the heart is to the Lord alone, when all the affections are intent upon him, and bestowed upon him, and upon none else, this is to have the heart wholly to him. So that now he that will have an eye upon credit, upon vaine glory, upon wealth, upon his lusts, upon any thing besides the Lord, that the heart is wedded to it, that he bestowes any part of that conjugall affection upon it, that should be wholly the Lords, this man is an unholy man, his heart is not holy, for it is not sequestered from other things, and consecrated to him alone: for that is to be holy.

And as the heart must be holy, so must the prayer be holy. When a man prays to the Lord with respect unto him, and hath an eye upon him, and nothing else comes in to take away part of this prayer, if by respect, and worldly, and carnall

Quest.

Ans.

Holiness what

The heart must be holy.

Simile.

An unholy man who,

The prayer must be holy.

carnal thoughts come in, and set you on worke to pray, now, these have a portion & interest in your prayers, they make your prayers profane and common, they are not peculiar to the Lord, they are unholy. So that is the holines then in seeking the Lord, when we are knit, and wedded to him, when one takes this resolution to himselfe, I am the Lords servant, and him will I serve, I am not the servant of man, nor of any creature, I am married to the Lord, and his will I bee alone, I will withdraw my heart from all things else. So likewise when a man prayes, so that his soule is intent upon the Lord, and upon nothing besides, when the whole streamie of his affections are carried to him, this is to seeke to him in holinesse, this is to sanctifie the Lord in our hearts.

And lastly, if there be any conscience of sinne, (that phrase I finde used in Heb. 10.) that is, if there be any evil conscience, if a man be conscious to himselfe of any sinne that is unrepented of, such a man cannot pray, that makes him unholy: if there be any sinfull lust yet living in him, that is unmortified in him, which is not washed away, such a man is unholy: yea, my Beloved, the Saints themselves, when they sinne against God; as you heard heretofore, they are suspended from the Covenant; though they be within the Covenant, yet they are suspended from receiving the benefit by it, that otherwise they might have: till that sinne be washed away, they are not holy. A priest, or one that was holy, if hee touched any unclean thing, hee remained unholy

Heb. 10. 2.

3
Particular sins
must be repen-
ted of.

Unholy
sinners

repent of
sinners

holy, till hee was washed, though otherwise hee were holy habitually, wholly dedicated to *Gods* service; so it may be with those, that are within the Covenant, though thou be a holy man, yet, if thou touch pitch, that is, if thy heart be polluted with any sinne, of one kinde or other, as long as that remaines, thou art unholy. If thou come now, and seeke to the *Lord*, you know what the judgement was in the old law, such an one was to be cut off from his people. And therefore, you shall finde, this was the constant practise of the Saints, when they sought the *Lord*, for any speciall mercy, they began with taking paines with their owne hearts, with humbling themselves for their owne sinnes, and the sinnes of the people: as we know, *Daniel* and *Ezra*, and *David*, in their prayers, (I need not stand to give you instances) and indeed so should we alwayes, when wee come with any request, and petition to the *Lord*.

First, let a man examine his heart and life diligently, looke backe to all his former wayes, consider and goe through all the particulars; see if there be any thing amisse, if there be any tincture of uncleannesse yet lying upon him, that is not yet washed away, if there be any pollution, any defilement of flesh, or spirit; and let him know, that it is but labour lost, it is a provoking of the *Lord*, to come as a man unprepared, to draw neere to him, except he be cleansed.

But you will say, How shall we be cleansed?

K

The practise of
holy men in
their prayers.

Quest.

*Ansiv.*2 Meanes of
cleansing a
mans selfe.

1

I answer, you are cleansed by renewing your repentance, and sprinkling the blood of Christ: when a man humbles himselfe for his sinne, and entreth into a covenant with *God*, not to returne unto it, when hee makes his heart perfect, and sincere with the *Lord* in that particular.

2

And secondly, when he shall withall beleeve, that it is forgiven through Christ, when hee is (sprinkled with his blood to wash it away: though thy sinne be great, yet this will make thee pure, now thou art washed, as it is in the *1 Corin. 6. 9.*

1 Cor. 6. 9.

Now you are washed, now you are sanctified, now you are justified: therefore let not a man be discouraged in this case: for, I confesse, there is nothing that gives such a checke to our prayers, that gives so many stabbes to them (as it were) that hinders us in that duty, as the conscience of sinne, when a man remembers such and such a sinne he hath committed: yet be not discouraged, for the blood of Iesus Christ is able to wash them away. Though a mans face be very foule, yet you know, a basen of cleere water will wash it cleane, and all the filth is gone: now the blood of Christ, is more effectually to rinse thy conscience, and to purge it from dead workes, to take away both the guilt of sinne, and likewise the power and staine of it. And therefore, if thou have any sinne, labour to be washed from it, that then thou maist come to the *Lord*, having thy heart sprinkled from an evill conscience, and thy body washed in pure water, as it is *Heb. 10. 22.* *Let us draw neere, saith the Apostle,*

Conscience of
sinne a great
hinderance in
our prayers.

*Simile.**Heb. 10. 22.**in*

in assurance of faith : but how? *Having our hearts sprinkled from an evill conscience* : as if he should say, Otherwise your drawing neere will be to no purpose, you shall but provoke the Lord in drawing neere, except you be thus sprinkled, and thus washed, and thus purified.

I, but you will say to mee, if this be required, who shall be heard in his prayers? For who can say his heart is pure, and his hands are innocent? and if this be required, that we must lift up holy and pure hearts, or else we shall not be accepted; what comfort shall we have in calling upon the Lord, at any time?

To this I answer, that to have a pure heart is not to be free from sin, and from daily failings, (for so indeede none should have a pure heart) but purenesse of heart, holinesse of heart is, to have *our hearts sprinkled from an evill conscience, and to have our bodies washed with pure water*, that is, to be purified before the Lord is nothing else, but to have such an habituall disposition, which makes a man ready to wash himselfe still, though hee be still spotted with sinne. So that this is the disposition of a holy man; if a man that drawes neere to the Lord with a pure heart, though hee be still spotted, and polluted, and defiled, yet hee hath an habituall disposition, hee hath a principle within, hee hath a new nature within, that is still working out that impurity, and washing it away; though still he be opposed, and assaulted, and tempted, and sometimes foiled, yet still he resists it, and fights against it;

Object.

Ansiv.

What it is to have a pure heart.

A holy heart
never makes
peace with sin.

Purity when

Simile.

as the *Israelites* had a charge never to make peace with *Amaleck*: such a disposition is in such a man, hee never makes peace with any sinne; though hee be led captive sometimes by it, yet he yeelds not to that captivity. This is to have a pure heart, though his heart be defiled sometimes as a vessel will be foule, yet hee washeth, and rinseth his heart, he never suffers it to continue muddy, and uncleane, and in a filthy disposition, but he hath a fountaine, a spring of grace within, that will worke out all impurity, as a spring workes out mudde; hee that thus purifies himselfe still, though the fountaine be muddy, though there be many injections, many temptations, many lusts and sinnes, yet, if he be purified himselfe, that hee will suffer no sinne to mingle with his heart (as it were) to rest there, and to abide, and dwell there, to lye and continue there, such a man hath a pure heart. We say, that is pure, that is full of it selfe, and will have no *heterogenea*, no other thing mingled with it, such a thing is pure, as pure oyle is nothing else but oyle. Now hee that hath a pure heart, is not he that hath simply nothing else, that hath no sinne mingled, that hath no drosse mingled with his wine, but hee that suffers it not to rest there; but as oyle and water, when you jumble them together, (as you know, when they are shaken together, they mingle) yet the oyle workes out, and purifies it selfe, it will not suffer it selfe to abide with the water: a man that is regenerate, a man that is borne of God, hath a seed remaining in him, though he doe sin,

fin, yet, saith the Apostle, *hee cannot sinne*, that is, he doth not agree, hee doth not mingle with that sinne, it hath no rest in his heart, but he workes it out; in a passion when hee is shaken (as it were) when he is transported, when he is not himselfe, there may be a mixture, and the fountaine, and the spring may be made muddy, yet let him come to himselfe, still he workes it out; that is to have a pure heart. So that a man thus affected may come with boldnesse to the throne of grace, and not be discouraged; what though thy sinnes be many, and very great, and often repeated? yet if thou finde in thy selfe such a disposition of purenesse and holinesse, still to cleanse thy selfe, though thou be still polluted and defiled, I can assure thee, thy heart is pure, thou mayst go with confidence to the throne of grace.

But now you will say this to me, (for that may be objected) why? but may not any carnall man say as much, he sins against God, and comes and askes mercy, he comes and cries for forgiveness, and saith he will sinne no more, and yet he sinnes againe the next day, and *addes drunkennesse to thirst*; that is, his sinne and his repentance they runne in a circle, as drunkennesse and thirst: how shall wee then distinguish betweene these two, that purifying disposition in the Saints, and those vanishing purposes that carnall men may have, that never had experience of the worke of grace, of that puritie of heart that wee speake of?

Object.

To this I answer briefly, you shall knowe the

Ans.

K 3

disse-

Difference between the godly and others in falling into sinne.

Sinne in a carnal man groweth stronger, in a godly man weaker.

A Paradox in Philosophy.

Quest.

Ans.

How sin in a godly man is weakened by his falls,

difference by this, a godly man, when hee falls into sinne, and is defiled with it, hee washeth himselfe from day to day: you shall find alwayes this, that hee gets ground of the sinne, of the lust, that manifests it selfe in any actuall transgression, still it loseth by it, it gathers not strength, but loseth strength: in a carnall man it is quite contrary, his sinne still increaseth, and intends the habit, and the lust growes stronger and stronger, it gets ground of him, and those good things that he hath, they are more and more worne out, and so they grow worse and worse from day to day, and that is the property of an evill man, of unregeneracy wheresoever, it is apt to grow worse and worse, and the more falls they have, the more sinne gets ground, and the more they lose; but it is not so with an holy man, the more hee falls, the more strength hee gathers, hee is the more holy by it, the more wary, and watchfull, and the more hee is emptied of himselfe, and drawes neerer to the Lord, and is the more inflamed with love of him, he is strengthened in faith, and repentance, and in every grace: so that here the rule now holds not true, that acts increase habits, but the contrary, acts lessen the habits, which is a paradox in Philosophy, but here it is so.

If you aske how it can be?

I answer, in its owne nature every act intends the habit, as well in a godly man, as another man, but it comes to passe by accident, as wee say, because the grace in him is stirred up, by those

those foiles, and slips, and those falles, and infirmities, to which he is subject: I say grace is stirred up in him more and more, and receives more vigour and strength. As wee say of true valour, it is increased more by opposition; so it comes to passe, that the more the childe of God falls into sinne, the more grace is intended, Satan gets less ground; as *Hezekiah*, when he fell into pride, the pride of his heart was lessened more by it, than when he shewed his treasure to the Ambassadour of the king of *Babel*, he knew not before the pride of his heart; that sinne, that fall did manifest his corruption, which he did not see before. So that when the heart is sincere, when it is pure, when there is a right principle within, grace is set more on worke to resist sinne. So *David*, when he had numbred the people, that made him more humble, and therefore the Lord shewed him more mercie afterwards, than ever he did before, hee shewed him where the Temple should bee built, and used him in that worke, and never shewed him such mercy, and kindnesse before: (I cannot stand to expresse particulars) so it is with all the Saints; their hearts are never better, nor in more holy temper, nor more searefull to offend, and in a more gracious disposition, than after their falls; and therefore consider this, that thou be not deceived, that thou mayst distinguish betweene this falling into sinne, and washing your selves, and that relapse to which evill men are subject; and keepe that for a rule, that wheresoever there is

Valour increased by opposition.

The heart of the Godly best after falls.

*Note.**Simile.*Vertue gets
strength by
wounds.*Simile.*

true grace, still it stirres it selfe more and more, as it findes more resistance, even as the winde and the water, and the fire doth; you know, the water when it findes a stop, it growes more violent, and so the winde; of the same nature is grace, where it findes a stop, and findes resistance, it growes more strong, and intent. The heathen had a little glimpse of this truth, when they said of vertue, that it growes more fresh and vigorous by being wounded, that is true of grace and holinesse, the true vertue, the more it is opposed the more it growes: even as you see in opposition in the disputes of schollers, and all kinde of contentions in law, or any thing else, the stronger the objection is, where there is ability in the party, it produceth new motions, and new answers, and puts them more to it; so these assaults and temptations, when there is truth of heart within, it drawes out more holinesse to God, and more strength, it multiplies the graces of God within: so that the graces receive increase, the more they are exercised, and intended; and sinfull lusts decrease, the minde is more emptied forth, the chaffe that is in us, and the drosse is more winnowed out, and the heart is more clenched from it. So much shall serve for this; that whosoever will come to the Lord in prayer, must sanctifie him in his heart, that is, he must come with a holy, and with a pure heart. Wee have shewed what this holinesse, and purenesse is, wherein it consists, and likewise how the objection is answered, that might deceive us. So much for that property. I

I must adde another, you shall find it *Phil. 4. 6.* whensoever you come to make your requests to the *Lord*, this is another condition that hee requires, to be thankfull for the mercies you have received already: *in all things*, saith hee, *let your requests bee made knowne to the Lord, with thanksgiving*: as if hee should say, take heed of this, that whensoever you come to put up any petition to the *Lord*, you forget not the duty of thankfulness, but still when you come to aske any thing that you want, remember that you give thanks for that you have. Beloved, this condition must not be omitted: you see the *Lord* himselfe puts it in very carefully, *Let your requests bee made knowne with Prayer, and supplication, and with thanksgiving*. There is much reason why our petitions, and requests should be accompanied with thanksgiving to the *Lord*: for is it not reason when you come to aske somewhat for your selves, that you should doe that also, that is acceptable to *God*? Will a man serve himselfe altogether to come meere to aske the thing he wants? This a man may doe out of love to himselfe, out of respect to himselfe, but you must remember to doe something that is pleasing and acceptable to the *Lord*. And therefore you shall finde in the old law, they were commanded still to come with peace Offerings, that is, Offerings, wherein they expressed thankfulness, whensoever they had any speciall request to the *Lord*, you shall find that was the manner in *Levit.* and other places, that such a man as came to request any thing,

6. Condition
required in
prayer, is,
Thankfulness.
Phil. 4. 6.

Note.

All mercies reduced to peace.

If we look only on our wants, we cannot be thankful.

Simile.

thing at the *Lords* hands, might not come empty handed : and what should hee bring with him ? a peace offering : what was that ? thankfulness for that peace he had enjoyed, that was a peace offering ; for peace is a generall word, comprehending all kinde of mercies. For what is our health, but the peace of our humours within ? what is our chearefulness, and joy, but the peace of conscience within ? all the comfort wee have in our name and state, it is peace in the particular, &c. So I say, whensoever thou comest with a petition, forget not to come with a peace offering, that is, forget not to come with thanksgiving to the *Lord*, for that which thou hast received, doe somewhat that is acceptable to him, as well as seeke for that which is usefull for thy selfe. Beloved, there is much reason for it ; because, if a man be poring on his wants still, if it be in his minde when he comes to call upon *God*, it will indispose him for spirituall performance, it will beget murmuring, and sorrow, and discontent, it will imbitter his spirit : when as a man remembers many mercies that he hath received, when he makes a catalogue of them, and enumerates them, it sweetens his spirit, it makes him more gracious, it acts those graces that are in him, it drawes him nearer to the *Lord*, it quickens him, it makes him more contented with his condition that he is in : whereas, on the other side, forgetfulness of mercies, when a man is onely intent upon his petition to have the thing done, he breakes many times into that sullenness of disposition,

disposition, that wee finde in children, that when they cannot have all that they would, they throw away that which they have; so that is our fault many times, when wee come and seeke to the *Lord* for any thing that wee need, wee are so intent upon that, that wee forget all the mercies wee have received, as if they were nothing: the *Lord* would not have it so, but will have us remember what wee receive, that wee may be content to want, that our hearts may bee brought to patience, and contentment, under the crosse, and to want what it shall please him for a time, to deny us; as *Iob* reasoneth, saith he, *I have received good from the Lords hands*, (it is his answer to his wife) *and shall I not receive ill?* So, if a good man be thankfull for mercies, it will make him ready to doe so, it will make him content with that present want: for hee lookes to that which hee hath had in hand. When a man saith thus with himselfe, thus, and thus much good I have received at the *Lords* hands: What though I want such a thing? What though I be prest with such an affliction, and calamity? I will be content to beare it, I say, the *Lord* lookes for this; expostulating with him and murmuring against him, is not a meeke manner of asking things at his hands, but when a man so askes, that withall hee is content to be denied, if his good pleasure be so. Now, thankfulnesse for mercie, makes us ready to be so affected, to be willing to be denied, to be content to resigne our selves to the *Lord*; and therefore he will have thankfullnesse to goe with it, when

The sight of
some good re-
ceived will
make us con-
tent to want.

whensoever wee come to aske any things at his hands. And therefore observe, that whensoever you come to seeke the *Lord*, you be thankfull for the mercies you have had, remember them, for it is a great meanes to prevaile in our requests. Thankfulness is (as it were) the incense, that perfumes your petitions, that makes them acceptable, and prevalent with the *Lord*, so much the sooner. Prayer goes up without incense, when wee offer up our petitions without thankfullnesse; because that is a sacrifice, as you know it is called the *calves of our lippes*, and ever when you joyne thankfulness with your petitions, it is like a sacrifice mingled with it, that helpes to prevaile with you.

7 Condition
required in
prayer, is, to
come in the
name of the
Lord Iesus
Christ.

Iam. 4.

The next condition is, and it must not be forgotten, of all the rest, that wee come to the *Lord*, *in the name of Iesus Christ*. This is a thing commonly knowne, you will say, who knowes not that, except wee come in the name of Christ, no petition can be acceptable? Beloved, I say to you in that case, as the Apostle *James* speaks, *James 4.* where he gives this rule, that we should say, *If the Lord will, we will doe such and such a thing to morrow, &c.* And when the answer would be ready, who knowes not this? saith he, if you know the will of the *Lord*, and doe it not, your judgement shall be greater; so I say, if any doe not practise this, (and it is a thing wee are exceeding ready to forget, or wee are ready to doe it in a formall, and in a customary manner, but to doe it in good earnest, as wee ought to doe it, therein

therein commonly wee come short) you know how great a sinne it was, in the old law, to offer without a Priest; in the 17 of *Levitiens* it is said there, if any man brought his Sacrifice, though it were the best sacrifice and the choice; yet, saith the text, *If hee did not bring it to the Priest, and to the Altar, but slay his sacrifice else-where, without a Priest, such a man was guilty of blood, and was to be cut off from his people: that is, hee was to be cut off by the Priest, by excommunication, and after by the civill Magistrate.* You know, it was *Azarias* fault to offer incense, when it was proper to the Priest to doe it. The same sinne wee commit when wee come to the *Lord*, and thinke, because wee have repented, and prayed fervently, because wee thinke, our hearts and spirits are in a good disposition, because we know no sinne, of which we are conscious, for this cause we thinke that wee shall be heard. It is true: the *Lord* requires these qualifications in the party, when hee prays; but take heed of thinking to be heard for this, this is to offer without a Priest. You must come thus to the *LORD*, and say thus unto him, *LORD*, I confesse (notwithstanding all this) I am unworthy, I have nothing in mee, why thou shouldest regard mee, it cannot be, that either I, or my prayer should be acceptable, but I beseech thee, take them at the hands of *Christ*, our *High Priest*, he that is entered into the vail, he that takes the prayers of the Saints, and mingles them with sweet odours; when a man can really doe

Levit. 17.

In what manner to come to God.

Levit. 5. 11.

Our prayers are
not heard for
any excellency
in them, but
for Christ.

doe this, with dependance upon Christ, and come boldly in his name, that is to offer a sacrifice to him; and this we must carefully remember; and therefore we see an excellent expression of this in *Levit. 5.* where this is made cleare to you, that it is not any excellency in the person, nor any fervency in the prayer, nor any purenesse, or holinesse that is found in him, nothing that comes from man, that causeth his prayer to be acceptable, but it is the Priest, in that place from vers. 8. to the 11. You shall finde there the law was, that he that came to sacrifice, *must bring a sheepe, or a shee goat;* but if he were not so rich as to doe so, he was able enough to bring *two turtle Doves;* yet if he were not able to doe that, then saith the text, *He shall bring the tenth part of an Epha of fine flowre,* (a very small thing) and saith he, *let him give it to the Priest, and hee shall make an atonement for him, and his sinne shall be forgiven.* Whence I observe this, that it is not the goodnessse of the sacrifice, the price, nor the choisines, nor the excellency of that when they came with a thousand Rammes, and so many sheepe, and bullocks, (as you reade of many great sacrifices that were offered by the Kings) yet the tenth part of an Epha of fine flowre, which was exceeding little, this prevailed fully as much; it shewes evidently, that it is not in the sacrifice, but the poorest, and the smallest, and the meanest sacrifice will prevaile with God, as well as the richest, and the greatest. What is the reason? For, saith hee, it is the Priest that must offer it, hee makes

makes it acceptable; So in this case, let the sacrifice be never so meane; yet if it be Christ, that offers the sacrifice, if it be commended to the Priest, and hee offers it, the Lord will accept it. You shall find that rule, *Levit. 5. 11. He that brings a sacrifice,* (this caution was given) *he must put no incense to it, neither oyle.* But should the sacrifice be offered without incense? No, you shall find in *Levit. 16.* that alwayes, the Priest when he entred into the Holy of Holiest, he burns incense, that the cloud of that incense might cover the Mercy-seate: the meaning is this, that when any man comes to offer a prayer to the Lord, he can put no incense to it, the Priest onely hee must put in incense, that is, *Iesus Christ* onely must offer the sacrifice, wherein the Lord smells a savour of rest: for the Lord expresth himselfe in this manner, as if he were disquieted for sinne, and can take no rest; now, when *Iesus Christ* offers a sacrifice, he smells a savour of rest; because it comes from him, in whom he is well pleased: so I say, wee must be carefull, that we remember we come in the name of *Christ*:

But, you will say, every man doth so, and how shall we know it?

You shall know it by this, if you have boldnesse, and confidence, that is an argument that you looke not upon your selves, but upon *Christ*. When a man is so exceeding timorous, and doubting, and fearefull, that hee dares not come to the throne of grace, or, if hee doe, yet hee makes a great question, whether he shal be heard

Levit. 5. 11.

Levit. 16. 11.
Christ must
put incense to
our prayers.

Object.

Ans.

How to know
when we come
in our owne
names in pray-
er.

or

What required
in the heart
that comes to
God in Christs
name,

Heb. 9.

Object.

Ans.
Two things re-
quired in our
sacrifice.

or no, this is too much looking to himselfe, here, the high Priest is forgotten. If thou come in his name, there is enough to carry thee out, it will breed boldnesse in thee, it will breed confidence: if thou come in the name of Christ, and offer up thy prayers through him, it will cause thee, in every petition thou puttest up, to thinke thy selfe so much beholding to Christ, that thou wilt be ready to say in thy heart, whensoever any petition is granted thee, I may thanke Iesus Christ for this. When a man, I say, shall be so much upon his score, it will make him so much indebted to the Lord Iesus for his sinne that is remitted, and this Petition that he hath granted, that his heart shall be more enlarged to thankfulness, when he is able to consider the benefit of redemption, and is ready to say with himselfe, If Iesus Christ had not dyed, if I had not had such an high Priest, that hath entred into the very heavens, as the Apostle saith, *Heb. 9. To make intercession for mee*, I had lost this benefit, I had never come to have put up a prayer to the Lord, or, if I had, it should not have beene heard.

But you will say to mee, If wee be heard for Christ; then though a man be sinfull, and though hee have none of the precedent conditions, though he have not that holinesse that is required, if the Priest make him acceptable, why may he not hope as well as the most holy man?

I answer, briefly, though the Priest give all acceptance to the sacrifice, and our prayers are accepted through him, yet that is not all, there are

are two things besides required, that the person that brings the sacrifice, be cleane; no impure person was to bring a sacrifice: secondly, that the sacrifice be without blemish; he that hath a male, and brings a female, is cursed: So this is required, that the person be righteous, and that the prayer be fervent, such as is indited by the helpe of Gods Spirit, that it may be a sacrifice fit for the Lord. But now, that we have from *Christ*, is this, that though the person be so, and the prayer thus qualified, and have those forenoted conditions in it, yet it is not acceptable without the Priest. And therefore this should encourage you, when you consider the glorious God, his holiness, that great distance betweene him and you, and your selves, on the other side, how vile and sinfull you are, and unfit to come and put up your requests to him, now, when you thinke of a Mediator, of an high Priest, who is entered into Heaven, who is gone thither, and sits at the right hand of Majesty, making intercession for you, when you consider there is one high Priest, who is able to prevaile, not like the Priests in the law, but one that is over the house of God, one that is the very sonne, that is not entered in through the blood of Bulls, and Goates, but with his owne blood; when out of this you shall receive confidence, and come neere him with boldnesse, this is to make use of *Christ*, and to offer sacrifice in him. There is no more remaining now, but that when you have considered all the conditions mentioned, and fitted your prayers according

The person must be holy, and the prayer fervent.

How to make use of *Christ* as our Priest.

L

ding

Waiting in
prayer requi-
red.

Simile.

Instances of
being over-
hasty after
prayer.

ding to them, that you be confident, and expect much, that when you have prayed, you may say thus; *Lord*, I expect now the granting of them, thou canst not now deny them, *Lord*, I will wait now. And this is our fault, when we have prayed, and the thing comes not presently, wee are ready to give over, we are not willing to waite. Beloved, that is one thing specially to be remembered, wee must so farre magnifie our prayers, wee must set a price upon them so farre, and so esteeme them, and thinke them of that worth, that they will bring the thing to passe. If a man take a drugges, or a medicine, or an herbe, and use it to a wound, or a disease, once or twice, or thrice, and if he see it doth no good, he will lay it aside, and take another medicine: for, saith he, I have tryed it, and it will doe me no good; so a man doth with his prayers, he saith, I have sought to the *Lord*, I have prayed for this thing twice, or thrice, and it is not granted mee, and therefore he is ready to lay it aside, as if it were not effectuell, and to take another meanes: this neglect of prayer is not to know the force of the medicine. You must know therefore of what efficacie prayer is, and trust it, and not give over, (for it is effectuell to bring the thing to passe,) and make no haste, but stay, and waite. It was *Sarahs* fault, when *Abraham* and shee sought to the *Lord* for a sonne, she made too much haste to give *Hagar* to *Abraham*, when they should have stayed till the *Lord* had done it his owne way. So *Rebecca*, there was a promise, and no doubt

Jacob

Jacob and shee prayed for the fulfilling of that promise; but she made too much haste, she tooke a wrong way to get the blessing by lying, this was not waiting, but a stepping out to another meanes, because they thought prayer and dependance upon *God* would not doe it. So *Saul* would not waite upon *God*, but hee would offer sacrifice, this was to make haste. And so it is, when a man is discouraged; *David*, when the thing was not presently granted, he was ready to give over, and falls to a desperate complaint, saying, *One day I shall fall by the hands of Saul*. Take heede of this, and when wee offer up our prayers thus, learne to know what they are, learne to trust them, and to depend, and waite upon *God*; say certainly, *I shall not be denied, the thing shall surely be granted.*

1 Sam. 17. 2.

So much for this time, and this Text.

FJNJS.

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